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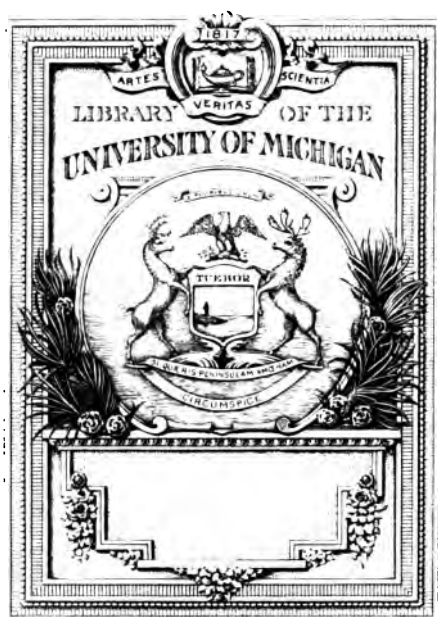
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Yours truly
Edward Fitt-bals

THIRTY-FIVE YEARS
OF A
DRAMATIC AUTHOR'S LIFE.

BY
EDWARD FITZBALL, Esq.,

AUTHOR OF

"NITOCRIS," "PILOT," "FLYING DUTCHMAN," "SIEGE OF ROCHELLE,"
"MARITANA," "MOMENTOUS QUESTION," "CROWN DIAMONDS,"
"BHANAVAR," "MICHAEL SCHWARTZ," &c., &c.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

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INTRODUCTION

THOSE who, like me, have gone over nearly forty years of the drama, and witnessed the picture of the past, must, I think, award to it the palm, if not of merit, of *originality*, which is, certainly, the more creditable of the two to any nation justly proud of not resorting to the peacock's feathers. The drama of the present day seems nearly almost all composed of translations; the real merit, then—that is to say, the *inventive* merit—must be awarded to our French allies in particular. The drama of the last half century was more the coinage of *English* brains. Till the termination of the last French war, the language of the Parisians was but sparingly spoken or

known here, and French works more difficult to obtain ; consequently we had such original authors as Sheridan, Goldsmith, Reynolds, Cumberland, Morton, and even Doctor Johnson, who considered the writing of a five act tragedy the highest summit of attainment to which the human mind could reach. It is not to be questioned that all and every one of these learned authors knew French, but a different and more national feeling pervaded the mind in those days. A man would not have felt honestly satisfied to have translated another man's work without acknowledging the *fact* ; and however excellent the translation might have been, would have fallen far short of the credit at that time awarded to originality. But as those authors only wrote for the Theatres Royal, men infinitely less erudite or pretending, who, so far from understanding the French language, scarcely understood their own, were the writers principally employed at the minor theatres. Where invention failed, the sword was not unfre-

quently nor inaptly in the time of war, resorted to to fill up the gap which literary deficiency left open. The most affecting concluding speech of a minor drama was often and unfailingly a broad sword combat. But this will cease to be a matter of surprise when we reflect that very little more than even half a century ago, it was only bettermost people who could read; many men of wealth, immense wealth, too, could scarcely sign their own names; the alphabet was a sealed book to thousands, and tens of thousands. There were then, but two classes—the learned and the unlearned. The Theatres Royal naturally pertained to the learned—the minors to the unlearned. Yet, with all this advantage, the balance of originality, so far as it went, generally inclined to the minors. In proportion as the former declined, the latter, aided by the rapid stride of general education, like a young settlement, grew rapidly up and glorified itself.

In the first instance, the Dibbins, Tom and Charles, stepped in to the aid of the

Surrey ; Moncrief, Macfarren, and Milner to the Cobourg, now the Victoria, then a new theatre. The works of these men gave quite a new complexion to dramatic affairs on the other side of the water—that is to say, on the other side of the Waterloo Bridge. Actors and painters of a very superior quality, and genius flocked to the newly-raised standards, who had lingered long and hopelessly to display their prowess and their talents at the great national houses.

The next mighty luminary which reflected its lustre upon the so-called illegitimate drama, was the wonderful genius of Sir Walter Scott; for although Sir Walter himself was no dramatist, his works were *so* dramatic, that, placed on the stage by such hands as Tom Dibdin's first, "The Heart of Mid Lothian," they assumed a new and magnificent feature, which even the theatres royal could not surpass. It was about this period that I myself, a very young champion, entered the lists, and threw down my gauntlet to the play-going world,

The "Fortunes of Nigel" became to me a brilliant triumph, the result of which will be fully told in the early course of the ensuing volumes; then such talented men followed in my wake, as Douglas Jerrold, Buckstone, Haynes, Serle, and a whole catalogue of others of great merit, with such painters as Stanfield, Roberts, C. Marshall, Tomkins, and the Wilsons, till at length, in the course of a few years, the minor theatres had risen to a pitch of grandeur and excellence, little or never anticipated by old stagers. The theatres, in their interior, became so magnificent as to elicit both wonder and astonishment; the Surrey Theatre being, at one time, decorated with gold and velvet, a Genoa velvet curtain covering the stage. The Cobourg, patronised by Her Royal Highness, the lamented Princess Charlotte, and Prince Leopold, decorated with one sunny glitter of gold braided mirrors, with a superb looking-glass curtain, which drew up and let down in the sight of the audience, and reflected every form and face

in that gorgeous house, from the topmost seat in the galleries, to the lowest bench in the pit.

All this revolution was the rapid march of learning, and, *originality*.

The minor drama at length attained to such a height as to excite not only the imitation of the nationals, but their envy and unavailing opposition, and reached the summit of its greatness, in the splendid production of many of the most finished and imaginative plays and dramas within the present annals of the stage.

The rise and fall of these matters, especially the decline of the national drama, with the great decadence of fine actors, occupy the faint colouring of the ensuing pages, from a detached diary, kept during a practical acquaintance with the stage of thirty-five years. An individual life, such as from want of the combination of similar circumstances, cannot occur again beneath the notice of living man; a life which, although sometimes, so deep down as to

exclude what was passing on the level of the water, sometimes too much on the surface to tell what was passing under the cresting of the waves, still supplies an amusing, if not instructive chain, which, though here and there broken, the mind of the intellectual reader will readily unite with an occasional link of his own, by which means he will himself become mentally an actor, and more interested in the gone-by scenes.

It is the history of a life, simple enough in itself, but through which the microscopic lens of philosophy, from its commencement, will discover the incipient impulse and end, and no other end to be accomplished, since every attempt to pass over its barrier failed. A water disposed in itself to be still, but into which great rocks and vast masses of volcanic eruptions seem to have fallen or been cast, to lift it up, in spite of itself, to the culmination, its apparent destiny, heaven best knows why, to accomplish.

I cannot apprehend that the enlightened

reviewer of the present day will attempt to crush this truthful work on any tortuous wheel. It is, after all, but a broken string of unpretending facts and anecdotes for the information and entertainment of such as take a more than common interest in stage affairs. As regards the underhand sort of attacks made on me in my youth, at this distance of time, when I look back to them without any longer being subject to the heartburnings they excited, and think, despite of their more than stormy opinions, how my argosies still sailed, and still sail calmly and merrily on, I am almost astonished that they ever distressed me; yet, I *was* treated thirty odd years ago, something like the poor boy, Macaulay speaks of, who, being ferociously arrested by Claverhouse and Westerhall for simply not being of the same opinion as themselves, and told to pull his bonnet over his brow and be shot; the spirited lad refused to pull his bonnet over his brow, and *was* shot. I refused to pull my bonnet over my brow to men of

similar dispositions, but have, fortunately, been reserved to tell my own story—to tell, to boast of a new revolution, even amongst reviewers.

The great march of instruction, the expanse of knowledge, which has done so much for the million, has made them capable of judging for themselves. Thirty years ago the mass had to be told what they might like, what they might not, according to the opinions, or pretended opinions of certain Charlatans. The public is now, every man his own critic, capable of seeing through the machinery complex as it was of such abuse as then existed, consequently, a manly and noble system of truth and liberality has sprung up amongst the reviewers of the present day, like the bright progress of their country—another consummation long devoutly wished for, and far more felicitous and cheering to the young aspirant for fame, however dreamy or friendless his attempt, or his genius.

When I turn into ridicule pretenders on

the stage who obtruded there, pompously to sneer and dictate, like Snarl in the *Critic*, without one practical idea in their heads, frightening the author, and even the manager, with a false literary pretension, especially a dramatic pretension of any kind, the allusion is by no means general, and merely refers to such sort of pretenders to the art of getting up plays as Monk was, who, a cavalry officer, being appointed to the post of admiral on board a man-of-war, and wishing to change the position of the ship, called out to the great amusement, especially of the *old* sailors “*wheel to the left!*”

THIRTY-FIVE YEARS
OF A
DRAMATIC AUTHOR'S LIFE.

CHAPTER I.

It was near Newmarket, so celebrated, all over Europe, for its horse races, in the rural and romantic village of Burwell, in Cambridgeshire, a village scarcely, at that period, known beyond the limits of its own county, that the author of these pages was born. As some may be apt to confound this secluded spot with the more well-known village of Barnwell, about a mile distant from the University of Cambridge, I must here take the liberty to point out to them that, by looking on the map, they will per-

ceive it lies at least eleven miles from the great seat of classic learning, where it was, in those days, almost as little heard of as it is at present in this mighty metropolis, London ; one side being screened, from the traveller's observation, by the great Danish embankment which crosses from the border of the fens at Reach, to the furthest limits of Newmarket Heath ; and the other by the vast marshy level which extends as far as the eye can trace to the venerable and picturesque cathedral in the Isle of Ely. In this old English nook, in an ancient house, overshadowed by a stupendous hollow elm tree, of great antiquity, designated the "Cross Tree," your humble servant first saw the light. The house, afterwards disposed of, his father purchasing a still larger estate, is now, from the convenience of its size, converted into a public-house, exulting in the unpoetical appellation of the Old Fox. It was told me, in after years, that my mother, having already presented my papa with six little pledges of connubial love,

had carefully put aside her *trousseau d'enfant* as an *heiress* loom for one of my sisters, and, after a lapse of several years, given up all ideas of any further progeny, when I began to make it known that there was in existence one other, who, at least, was pretty well resolved to force his way into the world, namely, myself; and, having reached it, the sturdy noise I set up, so startling and unusual in a calmed-down house, became so annoying to my father's greyhounds, that coming, *en masse*, to the door of the lying-in chamber, they joined more unanimously than harmoniously in the howl which sensitive dogs are wont to indulge in at the sound of a barrel organ or a flute: Whether this implied that my voice was very musical, (it did not grow up so,) or whether it was an ill augury of my future fate I am unable to decide—except that it seemed to be more applicable to the latter than to the former. Of musical talent I had but little to boast; Misfortune became my inheritance.

Before I could well comprehend the change, my father had removed with his family into his new estate, "*The Rookery*," and it was there that I always *seemed* to have been born. The reader must now fancy the scene an Elizabethan sort of house, or even perhaps more antique than that, an immense old pile, with rudely carved gable ends, of black solid oak, and deep narrow latticed windows—almost too narrow for the purpose of admitting air or light; short doors, and tall chimneys; some of the doors perforated in the form of a cross, as a sort of look-out before the admission of a stranger, or even a friend, and studded all over with bosses of diamond cut iron; such were the precautions necessary to be observed in society in the early days of those probably still existing portals—which should throw some light on the word *port-holes*. Many outhouses, and many acres of well-planted and well-wooded meadow land surrounded, on all sides, this oddly-fashioned dwelling of the olden times,

to say nothing of the venerable and century grown trees of the rookery at the back of the mansion, from which it derived its name. Then, there grew, on the southern side a coppice of intervening hazel, white-thorn, and woodbine closely woven together, with an incalculable number of the most exquisitely-scented violets—*such* violets!—primroses, lilies of the valley, and wild flowers of all descriptions, over the deep-wrought foundation of some old abbey or cloister, once dedicated by the doubtless lazy monks of St. Lawrence to their patron saint—so have I since gleaned. Alas! for the lazy monks and fat abbot, if such existed, where be they now? Their altar! their fishponds! The one an unknown spot; the others dried up in their foliage-covered depths, a matter of conjecture; but that only to the reflecting few; the peasant entertains not one idea on the subject. I dwell lingeringly on this truly hallowed spot, for it was in its dream-like solitude that I felt the first ray of poësy, or imagination, enter my mind.

I could not, even in my earliest years, see spread around me so many beauties by the hand of nature, without following that hand with my *heart's eyes* up to the All-sufficient Bounty from which it was extended. And as it was my delight to pass whole days in this tranquil retirement, a boy solitary, I soon taught myself mentally to inquire into causes and effects, and whys and wherefores, which I could not even casually have heard explained by the lips of others, being then exceedingly deaf, owing materially, I suspect, to the dampness of that fenny atmosphere to which, at all times, I hesitated not to expose myself. This peculiarity, I have no doubt, had much to do with my remarkable love of retirement and abstraction even when a child, and led me to seek information and delight in the silent book of nature, which I could never have acquired without much difficulty from the actual *voices* of my parents, and my companions.

But, by the way, I should perhaps have set out by telling you a little of my parent-

age. I believe such is the time-authorised custom of all narrators: I will do so.

My grandfather was the celebrated Dr. Ball, of Mildenhall. He married into the Isaacson family, and lies buried with his wife, in a tomb, by the side of the church near the entrance to the Abbey Gate, St. Edmund's Bury. My grandfather was killed by being thrown from his horse.

Of the Isaacson family I retain but little recollection, except that they seemed to me to form a whole clan of parsons and doctors: One of them from his presenting me when a boy with a flute, I recollect more distinctly. He was called by every one Old Bob Isaacson, not out of disrespect, for he was universally respected, and I believe would have been as much offended at any other appellation, as a duke would to be called plain *Mr.* He was very facetious, and one of the most generous old fellows in the county. As a proof of his facetiousness Mr. Newby relates the following: A gentleman, a London sportsman, whom Bob had picked up in his numerous avocations,

(for he was a great land auctioneer after the manner of Robins,) came down *constantly* as the 1st of September, bringing with him a sporting friend to shoot upon Bob's manor, and live at Bob's hospitable table in his princely mansion near Newmarket. These devoted friends, in the luxuriant fare of their generous host, had only one regret, which was, that though year after year they devoted themselves to live like fighting cocks, during the *whole* sporting season with Bob, Bob never would put himself out of the way to return *their* visit in London. Now this was unpleasant, nay distressing, to men of liberal minds, who wished on their part to show Bob something like a grateful sense of the hearty John Bull welcome which he never failed to accord them.

At length, business, not pleasure, brought Bob to town, when, having an hour to spare, and finding himself within the very neighbourhood of his two *disinterested* friends, although he could not remain long enough

to allow them to indulge in their display of that gratified generosity which he conceived, judging by himself, their warm hearts would be too anxious to gloriole in, he could give each a hearty shake of the hand, to prove to them the truthfulness of his esteem, and his conviction of the delight they must feel at seeing him in the great metropolis. Bob called at No. 1, sent up his card. This *friend* was sorry, he was dressing to go to the Stock Exchange. Bob, the best natured man in the world, thought that the rise or fall of the funds, no doubt, depended on such vigilance as prevented such a friend from rushing down stairs into his arms. He, therefore, with a Pickwick smile upon his jovial face,—so truly jovial,—stepped, or rather waddled, for he was very short and stout, across the square to *friend* No. 2. Again he sent up his card: a sort of scuffle ensued, and Bob, who had, with all the familiarity of a guest, certain of a pressing welcome, wandered perhaps further into the passage than strict *etiquette* required to look

at a splendid painting of dead game, heard distinctly from a well-remembered voice—
“What a bore!—tell him I’m out of town; I shan’t be at home for a fortnight!” Bob did not wait for the message; he had a great horror of untruths, especially of the mean vice of compelling a servant to speak one, and therefore without loss of time departed.

The 1st of September returned; the *friends* had written as usual announcing their anticipated arrival, dogs and all, by the Doublebody; Bob was on the alert. Rat, tat, tat, tat; the sportsmen are on the clean white steps outside. The groom, a stout fellow, opens the door.

“Is Mr. Isaacson at home?”

“Is your name Mr. G.?”

“I am Mr. G.”

“Oh then, that’s all right. Master is very sorry, but he’s busy a-cooking a rump steak, and can’t be spoke to——”

“But, my good friend, I’ve come all the way from town, expressly to see your master,” vociferates the other, with an insinua-

ting voice. "I'm his intimate friend, Mr. T."

At this instant Bob presented himself at the extremity of the passage, a white apron on and a gridiron in his hand, as if to confirm the groom's unpleasant intelligence, exclaiming in his auctioneer's voice :

"Who's that?"

Groom. "Measter T. from Lunnon."

Bob. "What a bore! Tell him I'm out of town, and shan't be home for a fortnight."

"Master's gone to town, and won't be home for three weeks," roared the well-pleased groom, slamming the ponderous door in the face of the mortified cockney-sportsmen, with a bang which nearly made the guns under their arms explode.

My father was a gentleman, therefore, of respectable family, as you see, and also of good estate, having so much, at one time, as five hundred acres of freehold land, all his own, lying in the village of Burwell. My mother, whose maiden appellation was

Fitz,* had been married previously to the Rev. Brundish Marker, of Bury St. Edmunds, where he preached; but dying of apoplexy a year after his marriage, (though not thirty years of age,) left my mother a young widow, without issue, possessed of a pretty fortune, situated both in Bury and in the city of Norwich, of twenty or thirty thousand pounds. And this fortune, she brought afterwards, to my father; so that, with her estate and his own, which I have already shown was somewhat considerable, he ought to have prospered well enough in life. But unfortunately there was a upas tree which overshadowed him, and consequently his family, not far off; that upas tree was *Nev-*

* Proud enough she was of this name, believing, from tradition, that her great ancestor was a natural son of William the Conqueror, by a Saxon lady; certain it was that her great grandfather held a grant from the Conqueror, of a piece of land called Fitz-Follie. He was a great agriculturalist, it appears, in those days, and tilled his own ground with a silver ploughshare, such being a mark of high distinction in barbaric times.

market. Ah! I reiterate that word with bitter recollections, while memory calls back to me the tears, the night watchings, the heart achings, the vain entreaties of my poor mother, and the weak professions of my father, to stop ere ruin had absorbed all, in the horse-race and the dice box. The infatuation amounted to a malady; it was incurable. Ruin came; my father died, still a young man; our estate at Burwell mortgaged to the roof, and the estates of my mother, which she patiently resigned to him, one after the other, alike sold and lost. Poor, deluded man, with all his faults, he was principally his own enemy; would have done a good turn, as he did many, to any one, even to those who most wronged him; and had he been less truly generous, and more austere, he might have been better thought of after his death. I was scarcely eleven years old when this misfortune happened. My elder brother at sea, a midshipman in the service of his Majesty. There was still to carry on

the estate. My mother was robbed and cheated on every side. At length, at the simple age of twelve years, I took upon myself the management of the whole farm : the cultivation of the land, the sale of its produce to the merchants, and, in the course of a few years, by unremitting zeal and industry, had paid off several thousand pounds of the encumbrance.

It was my evil destiny nevertheless, to be constitutionally afflicted, from a child, with an extreme sensibility, which led me at all times, like a sensitive leaf, to recoil naturally from the approaches of strangers, and even every-day people and every-day events, to shrink back into my humble self, and the solitude which I preferred and loved : God always provides for the infirmities of His creatures. I had an intuitive knowledge of painting, of poetry, of sculpture : Not but what I had beheld such things at the house of my cousin, Dr. Sandiver of Newmarket, who was medical attendant to the Prince Regent. This

gentleman had many very fine paintings and sculptures : I had often seen them. I felt an immediate desire to imitate what I had witnessed : and my attempts, although my colours were often squeezed from flowers, and my statues composed of wood, were not without wonder and commendation, even from the informed, as well as the ignorant. My poetry, however, was my brightest plume ; my greenest laurel ; I delighted and revelled, marvellously, in the *rural*. How should other ideas possibly have come across my imagination ? Before I could well write or read, my infatuated father would compel me to stand on a table, and recite all sorts of doggerel rhymes of my own to people, who, no doubt, pitied both him and *me*. I almost wonder he never made an exhibition of me : It would have told marvellously now—but exhibitions were not then so plentiful as at present ; to be sure, there was the young Roscius ; but, he *was* really an extraordinary genius. Our precocious

modern tomtits would not have gone down then: No, nor many of the irresistably comic, and serio entertainments, of which even the newspapers give such florid accounts in the present day. After I had seen a play* I was at school then, at Newmarket, at Albertus Parr's, the painting and the sculpture became as airy nothings. I was *at once* a dramatic poet: I would gladly have been an actor, but deafness, as naturally apprehended, would have proved a sad drawback to that enterprise. It was something to be able to write: and to write *scenes*. This was a new source of glory: I made a theatre, painted the scenes and characters, and wrote the pieces myself: the managers of the present day can do no more. My father was enchanted; my

* In the cockpit at Newmarket: "Cheap Living" and "The Farmer." The young Fishers', the manager's sons, came to our school—didn't I envy them the possession of the tin daggers which they sometimes stealthily brought, up their sleeves, to astonish the boys with—the elder Fisher, the manager was, I should say, a good comic actor, but the ludicrous way in which he lifted his wig up and down, is all I now distinctly remember of him.

mother, I must do her, good soul, the justice to say, never greatly approved these visionary poetical dramatical propensities : and frequently told me a melancholy story of one miserable, mad poet (Tasso), who died under very forlorn circumstances, without, as she expressed it, a *shilling* in his pocket : Poor Tasso !

The hint produced no salutary effect, I was already an incorrigible scene painter, master and tailor of a theatrical wardrobe ; author and manager, and what surpassed the managements of the present time, I could always command an audience, and a delighted one. It may seem singular, after what I have just stated, as regarded my retiring sensibility, that I should have been able to face my audience, especially in so many different capacities ; but, be it known that I was *always behind* the curtain, and the vulgar feeling of calling for the author, to have a *stare* at him, did not then exist in England, especially in *my* theatre ; and I *paid no one to do it*.

I must here digress a little, to relate an anecdote respecting my earliest dramatic production, which does reflect a credit upon me, I think, worthy of commendation, although it turned out none the less unfortunate for its good intention. My father had been dead but a short time, when, filled with real regret, at the many difficulties of my mother's widowed condition, I was struck with a notion of emancipating her, very shortly, from the load of encumbrances under which she seemed to weep and struggle in vain. How I set about my task, is worthy of a new chapter.

CHAPTER II.

I sat up, night after night, and secretly, wrote a tragedy in two acts: a musical, historical, *demoniacal* tragedy. When finished, I read it over and over again—to myself *only*—in a transport of perfect delight. It *must* do: Who was the manager in his senses *could* reject it? It was the time of the great annual fair, at Bury St. Edmunds. The players were there; I conceived the vast idea of going secretly to Bury, and of obtaining, I knew not how, an introduction to the all-important director of the theatre.*

I forgot my timidity: I forgot every

* My mother had frequently related to me anecdotes of Dr. Goldsmith, and how he produced his comedy of *She Stoops to Conquer*. This probably instilled into my mind the idea of presenting a play to a manager.

difficulty : I saw nothing but the *roll* of bank notes, with which I firmly believed the delighted manager would present me for my M.S., and which I, on my part, should, still more gratified, present to my mother : (consider reader, I was but twelve years of age.) Her look of joy and astonishment arose before me, in my dreams : Oh, it is pitiable that such illusions should vanish : but it is so, in this life for some good end, and daily, hourly, amid all our worldly experience, how many far more consistent and far more promising hopes fade around us ?

Be sure I dressed myself finer than Moses, the Vicar of Wakefield's son did when he rode forth to sell the colt. I had to encounter a *manager*, a much more formidable king to encounter than a *real* king. I secretly, therefore, thrust the invaluable papers into my side pocket, and mounting my pony, proceeded with all my equestrian dignity towards Bury, where some friends of my mother would be delighted to welcome me ; my good mother believing

that I merely wished to see the fair : She little dreamed what a happy return I meditated for herself. And I remember, that tears of joyful secrecy, flowed from my eyes, as I bade her, with ill dissembled feelings, good bye, and heard the heavy spring latch of the great gates clash after me.

From Burwell, by Newmarket, to Bury St. Edmunds is, I think, a ride of about eighteen miles : You enter the town by a long continuous street ; I looked every where, on each side for the theatre, which I am sure I should have known *by instinct*, had I passed it. During these researches my eye encountered a personage of no ordinary interest and consequence to me in my extremity. It was a *performer* ; I had seen him act at Barnwell, *near* Cambridge : It was *Frederic Vining* ! Ah ! he does not remember that day, which I recollect, but too well ; and also how *kindly* he directed the lad who approached him, as if he had been a deity, to the lodging of Mr. Hindes the

manager, thinking doubtless that the lad had brought a letter for a country bespeak. He never could have supposed that country boy carried in his pocket a *tragedy* of his own composition, in which was written a part, expressly for Vining himself; an *old Hermit!* but, of course, who turned out to be a *youthful* prince in disguise. Think of all this: think of the unsophisticated innocence on the one part, and the natural unconsciousness on the other. I apprehend, without detracting from its interest, I may venture to forestal the *dénouement* of my anecdote, by asserting that Vining never played the Hermit, although, many years after, he kindly enough did enact for me, in my first drama, and through his brilliant professional career, both in London and the country, in my various pieces played, as well as they could be played, "many parts."

To cut this story short, after innumerable heart-burnings and palpitations: I summoned courage enough to steal from my friends that very evening and knock at the

manager's door : was granted an *audience* : presented my tragedy. He was a good-natured-looking fat man, that Mr. Hindes ; I can see at this moment, his look of amused surprise as he glanced at the M.S. and enquired—" Did *you* write it ?" On being answered proudly, in the affirmative, he addressed me kindly, *very kindly*. I was to call early next morning for my *sentence*. And this is but a sketch, not filled out, of what not unfrequently takes place in older life, between *more important puppets*.

Fancy what an age of suspense it was for me to pass, till the next morning. There was no filling the chasm satisfactorily, but by going to the *play* : I did so : and while I gazed at the actors, and heard them applauded, conjured up in my mind's music, similar sweet approvals which were swiftly to follow similar exertions in my own exulting behalf. Happy delusion ! I had no idea, why my own tragedy could not have been performed the *ensuing* night. My attention, however, was soon absorbed,

even from myself, by the performance of a Mrs. Bowles, in Lady Macbeth. This grand, fearful delineation of that almost awful character, completely led me away : I have seen Lady Macbeth well acted since ; even by Mrs. Bartley, (Mrs. Siddons I never saw,) but never, I think, did I see the iron queen of Scotland so magnificently personated as on that evening, by Mrs. Bowles, I admit that it was a first impression. It was also a *lasting* one. During the night, in my sleep, she appeared to approach the bed-side, washing her gory hands, and uttering those terrific words " Out, out damned spot !" I awoke perturbed, with the waking reality of having to face the manager, a conviction almost as terrible to my recollection as the solemn adjurations of the grim wife of the sanguinary Thane.

" Change we the scene," as Sir Walter would say. I am again standing in the presence of Mr. Hindes : His looks are gracious, very gracious ! But the tragedy is *rejected*, I remember both his bland look

and his words. "Have you a *father*, young gentleman?" he said. "No sir." "Nor a mother?" "Yes sir." "Is she very fond of you?" "Oh yes! and I of her." "Give Mr. Hindes' compliments to her," continued he, "and tell her to spare no exertion to give you a good education, you deserve it." It was a compliment which I did not understand, although I felt that it somehow detracted from my work. I returned *blighted*: the manuscript fell, like a thunderbolt, into my frozen hand.* On my sad, solitary, humiliated ride home, disappointment overcame me, so the M.S. of my *first* tragedy flew scattered to the winds on Newmarket Heath.

* Had it been a thunderbolt, I should have flashed it fearlessly as the property man wields his resin torch behind the scenes, to the perfect annihilation of the Theatre Royal Bury St. Edmunds, and like a second Sampson, have expired in the ruins.

CHAPTER III.

FROM that time I passed almost all my days in attending to the farm, and went nowhere, except to Cambridge market, and an occasional Christmas visit to Lanwade Hall, the seat of the Cottons, to visit my relations the Isaacsons. This old feudal mansion, with its ancient moat, and Robert the Devil sort of chapel, was very interesting to me ; I marvel that I have never heard it more talked of by Antiquarians. My friend Planche would write a charming volume about it. But my cousins, one branch of the Isaacsons, who were the inmates (some thirty years ago) of this romantic domain, knew as little of romance, as of poetry ; it would have been just as consistent to have spoken to them of the then

scarcely conceived existence of *gas*. Yet, were they very worthy people, and hospitality and "*welcome*" the motto of their house. It was about this period that my brother, nine years my elder, who in the interim had been promoted to the rank of first lieutenant, returned home to reside, and I fear to think how like the envious brother in the Prodigal Son I became on that festive occasion: It was not that I did not love my brother as myself, but it was the difference I observed between us, and made between us. His dress, his coat trimmed with gold lace: then he wore a gold epaulette and sword.*

* These, with his easy and polished manner, made me look into myself. The contrast was anything but pleasing, I began to imagine that to go forth into the world must be something after the fashion of thrusting one's body into that far-famed mill, wherein enter we ever so old or ugly, we come forth young, handsome, and I suppose accomplished. I never calculated upon the crimps and tortures to be endured inside that mill, (the world). There was a courtesy, too, bestowed upon my brother, a deference which I more begrudged him than the fatted calf; it might be termed jealousy, it might be deemed ambition. There are those who would call it the *spur of destiny*, as Pope says "Man never is," &c.

My father had left him his executor too. In every respect he had been better cared for than myself, and one day when my horse was led out of the stable for my brother to ride, without the slightest deference to me, except being told that I *must* succumbe to my *elder* brother and *walk*, if I had business to attend to on the estate ; I could no longer repress my mortification, my wounded feelings, my pride, call it any name you please : I was young, proud, oppressed, and flatly answered that I would no longer play the part of a slave, since my “ *elder* brother” had come home to play the part of *master*. I had no idea of enacting a servant, and that I, in my turn, would go into the world, when it might happen to me also, to become of more consequence than I appeared at present, likely to prove in my home. I kept this resolution : It was the hasty resolution of a boy of sixteen ; and where is there not such a boy, ripe at all times, at such an age, for some new enterprise ? I

at first thought of going to sea, becoming like my brother : but the same means, and the same interests were now wanting. My great partiality for books, led me then to think, that I should like some pursuit in which they were essential; even to print them.* This resolve overcame me like a mania. It was a bite of my poor father's headstrong propensity, only not of so dangerous a tendency. Having once got this idea into my head, I could no longer rest nor repress it, and without having ever seen a type, much more a printing office, I eventually made my way to Norwich, and articulated myself for the consideration of a tolerable sum of money, for three years, to learn, what the world in its refinement calls

* I read somewhere, a flourishing account of the tranquil harmony of a printing office, the *glories* of the *press*, the benefit a printer was to mankind, the marvels of Dr. Franklin : In fact I fancied type was cast in silver, and the press something after the fashion of a delicate rosewood cottage piano. Such mistakes are hourly made by the inexperienced, wiser than I was, on points of tenfold import.

the *art*, not the *servitude* of letters. During this new and capricious apprenticeship, to which I had so willingly enchained myself, I will not say that I never repented, because I *did*, and often, and very, very often *since* : But, nevertheless, there were satisfactions emanating from this change in my position, in after time, which led to introductions and to happinesses without which its connecting link could scarcely have come to pass ; and, much as I worship the country, there was, especially at that time, no sort of society, be it observed, in that obscure place, Burwell, which understood me : nor any sympathy with a poetical imagination whatever ; whereas, in a great city like Norwich, or especially in London, a man of *any* turn of mind is sure to find congenial associates who know how to understand and to appreciate him, and nothing can surpass the satisfaction of such a conviction. To be something is the hope and desire of every ambitious feeling, therefore it is only natural that the aspiring mind

should incline towards the platitude where that something is to be attained. With no different or better ideas, perhaps, than the single-minded beings around me, I should not probably have quitted my native home at the mere pique of my brother taking possession of my horse, a boy's affront, a thing to be forgotten as forgiven, but such was the spur of my *intention*, and it is curious to observe, on my peculiar disposition, how that little circumstance operated, despite of myself, and excused me with myself, for turning my natural inclinations into a channel far more congenial to them, than the rustic sort of life which I had hitherto led and looked on as a *duty* to my mother, rather than a pleasure to myself. I was not fond of the pursuit of agriculture, we seldom like what is *forced* upon us: a boy seldom takes pleasure in his father's profession. I had other thoughts far apart from it,—they had been early inspired by books, and excellent ones. But where?

and how? you will naturally enquire, my father was no student, nor my mother; no, the books of my mother's first husband, the Rev. Mr. Marker, were all collected in an immensely large closet, in our old house: no one scarcely ever examined those books, save myself, and, such as I *could* read, I did read, over and over again. They consisted principally of religious works,—sermons, poetry, Shakspeare, Pope, Prior, Dryden, many very scarce and valuable volumes, with the *Arabian Nights*, *Don Quixote*, *Town and Country Magazines*, Sylvanus Urban's, and innumerable tracts added to this mental resort, from which I had extracted so much honey. I had lately seen *many* fine plays well performed at Newmarket, Cambridge, and Bury, and I must say if I felt any ingratitude at the monotony of my life before this event, that it became tenfold more monotonous after. These books, this play acting, and this printing scheme, combined together to bring about a complete revolution in my mind. I only

wanted some reasonable or unreasonable excuse, like my brother's favoritism, to toss up my cap of liberty. I obeyed the impulse: On such trifles are hinged destinies. A cunning, plodding fellow, although not the heir-at-law, might have kept his father's estate, have manoeuvred to get rid of its encumbrances, to live and die in it. It *might* have been so with me, for, though of delicate health, I have, with the exception of one sister, outlived all my family. At the dawn of life, and the autumn of life, we see things with very different eyes, but I should, I confess, yes, even now be truly sorry to relinquish the many refinements of a superior intercourse with the congregated talents of existence, for any isolated condition whatever, however abundant with worldly advantage.

The moment of quitting home, when it did arrive, brought with it many a bitter pang, and many an involuntary tear. I loved my mother with an intensity of filial affection, and although I had a jealousy of

what I then considered her greater partiality for my brother, because she and my father had made him in education and profession a much greater personage than myself; still, let it be believed, that I loved neither *her*, no, nor *him* the less. I could not endure to be the *second* in esteem, and witness it; or, at least, fancy that I witnessed it, for

" To the jealous mind, trifles light as air
Are strong as Holy Writ."

When I came to trace for the last time scenes in which my almost dreaming childhood had passed, peculiarly, but not unhappily, away, my heart greatly humbled itself, but I was too proud to acknowledge it. I was going from my home, I knew scarcely whither, or for what. Certainly not to elevate my position in life; but of that I was not then wise enough to be aware. I had many repinings as I bade good bye to old friends, even the humblest, whom I did not esteem the less because they were humble. Then there were old

associations—scenery, in which every tree wore a friend's face also, whose whispering leaves had often spoken to me in melodies which my heart seemed to understand. The antique house, the old garden, the vast orchards, the golden-cupp'd meadows, and the romantic grove of St. Lawrence. They were to be lost sight of, perhaps for ever. The many nooks and dingles, and haunts of the wild birds, and the wild flowers, all in their natures so sweet that I alone knew of, that nobody else knew or cared to know of, they were to be forsaken and never again visited by such a visionary spirit as mine. Who else could understand the divinity of their beauty, peopled as my imagination had peopled them? Who can sympathise with invisible beings save the mind which created them? The Romans peopled springs, rocks, and caverns with imaginary deities, known and worshipped by all; who could sympathise with mine, known only to myself? But I forsook them sullenly for the more sub-

lunary world ; my mossy banks are now torn up by the plough, and the old ivy-mantled trees probably fallen long since a sacrifice to mammon—victims to the axe ; while he who was the high priest of such sylvan shrines and their chimerical rites, laughs at himself, as, at this far off distance, he contemplates in the stream of time his own changed image, and asks—is it possible this once was that devoted worshipper of *pure nature*. But what is changed?—youth only ; nature, I love thee still—thy forests and thy glens, thy dewy mornings, and thy starry nights, and, when I love thee not, “chaos has come again.”

Sad recapitulation of the parting hour :
Farewell my native village, farewell the neighing steed, the tall spire o’ertopping my father’s tomb, dear, weeping mother—farewell ! The world is all before me, where to choose my place of rest, and Providence my guide !

CHAPTER IV.

WHERE was I? Oh, I had quitted my home, and the old farm, and turned printer. I was already disappointed; I felt greatly the loss of liberty; and, again, I was disappointed in *not* finding the congenial associates I had anticipated. There was a feeling of the old pride of independence, which I could only conceal, never stifle. My masters were not my masters—above me, yet beneath me. I was in place, yet out of place at the same time. I neither comprehended them, nor they me. They had taken me for my money, and I had gone to them with a mistaken view of reality. Everybody knows that *theory* is one thing, *practice* another. The printing

profession, although a most interesting and vital one, is both laborious and dirty, if we wish, as all ought who undertake it, to learn *properly* the *practical* part, which in a country office is the most essential.

A little reflection, however, speedily put right my mind, and put me as speedily on a better footing, not only with my masters, but with myself. I soon contrived to render myself essential to their interests, and became, consequently, much liked. I felt that I had thrown myself out of a sphere to which there was no returning; that repentance and regret were virtually unavailing, and in a very short period I would not have retreated had it been in my power. I became a tolerably good printer, contrived to get highly respected by every person employed in the office, which is as much as needs be said on this subject. There is, as every one knows, a Theatre Royal at Norwich. The company passes the winter there. As I was at no loss for money, I had frequently the gratification of seeing

plays much better performed than they are at the present day at *any* theatre in London. The company consisted of Mrs. Faucett, mother of the now popular Miss Ellen Faucett; Mrs. Jones, a capital actress in Mrs. Davenport's line; Mr. and Mrs. Clifford, Beacham, Frederick Vining, Bennett, Smith, and Bellamy, with frequent stars, such as the elder Kean, Young, and Miss O'Neil, from London. What *could* be better? After my departure from Burwell, my brother succeeded indifferently with the management of the estate, my mother, now far advanced in years, wishing to retire, the house and land were sold for twelve thousand pounds, and they came after me to reside in the Lower Close, near the cathedral, Norwich. I found once again a tranquil home, with my own family, till the three years expired, for which I had bound, or rather engaged, myself. When the termination of my probation arrived, they would still have retained me in the office, and to do them jus-

tice paid me many professions of respect and esteem ; but I had a sister just married and living in Nottingham, I had made up my mind to go and visit her. I departed accordingly, and I speak of this little excursion with the more pleasure, inasmuch as it introduced me to the family of poor Henry Kirke White, who treated me as the family of such a poet would be sure to treat any one gifted with the slightest spark of talent or genius, or the smallest love of poetry. My brother, however, who was truly attached to me, still wrote and requested me to return to Norwich. I was also anxious to be near my mother, who was getting aged. There was yet another motive beyond all others why I wished to return previously to quitting Norwich : I had fallen in *love*. I'll tell you how. I was returning one warm summer's day from the office to dinner, when under the overhanging lime trees at the corner of the Close Garden, which turns up to the Dean and Chapter's Office, I abruptly en-

countered a young lady, who seemed to me something more than human—of a sweet, feminine, and woman-surpassing beauty. My time had come. As I paused still to gaze at her, like a person bewitched, or rather enchanted, she glided lightly past. I was too unimportant to have attracted any notice of hers, and long ere I recovered my rational reflection, she had disappeared, like one of my imaginary spirits, melted into air; while I, looking this way and that way, almost began to believe that my stretch of imagination had been carried a little too far, that I was walking about in a dream. It was no dream. We met again, and she became my wife. But you must hear how it all happened.

My ideas of the future, I mean the earthly future, were very vague. At nineteen or twenty we scarcely think of time. I suppose, like other simpletons at that age who are supported by their family, I saw all before me of the *colour de rose*, especially as I was in love with a mys-

terious unknown, which rendered it so much more romantic and interesting to me. Added to this I had published a little poem called "The Idiot Boy," of which, although Messieurs of the *New Monthly* did me the honour to speak in a most uncompromising way, I was somewhat conceited, and didn't break my heart as poor Kirke White did, especially as its publication had met with the kindest encouragement and commendation from *the benevolent Bishop of Norwich,—the best of bishops,—Mrs. Inchbald, Mrs. Opie, and the celebrated Capel Loft*, all of whom wrote me the most encouraging flattering letters, the more kind, inasmuch as the little unobtrusive poem of "The Idiot Boy" was almost wholly unworthy of their notice—I *own it*. Still I began to fancy myself somebody, little inferior to the Laureate, not a very high aspiration after all, and to feel the tips of my feet on the roses where I had long looked to balance them,—and the laurels round my head, where I had also aspired to wear

them. On excellent terms with myself, the ideal of the presiding angel which was to reign over my future kingdom of poesy floating in my brain, I was wandering to and fro amongst the heartseases and daffodils of my brother's little garden, when he came suddenly out of the house, dressed with the greatest nicety and exactitude, telling me he was going to pay a visit to two young ladies and their mamma, to whom he had been recently introduced by a brother officer, and that they lived at the house opposite, the windows of which o'er-topped the shrubs and trees of our little domain. Those ladies had read some of my lines !—so my brother told me—they had watched me from their lattices, wandering as I did amongst the roses and honeysuckles, and were curious, to use his own phraseology, “to come within close hail of a *real poet*.” Such was in fact his outline of a message, worded, no doubt, differently by the ladies.

My brother, who had a sovereign con-

tempt for anything not ship-shape, as T. P. Cooke calls it, presenting his despatches in this somewhat disparaging tone, be assured I felt somewhat indignant at the message, and, of course, declined an invitation to be stared at ; I always disliked that, even by young ladies, whom he designated "first-raters." I know not what he said to my fair invitresses, but certainly the invitation was no more repeated. I was seated one calm, lovely evening, half-buried in an alcove of flowering plants, and wholly buried in a dream of romance, when suddenly my reverie was disturbed by something which fell immediately at my feet. I thought, at first, perhaps it was a bat which had been wheeling its dull, circuitous flight above, it was so soft and light in its descent, but on picking it up I perceived that it was a satin slipper, embroidered with flowers and gold beads, from its size and symmetry belonging to one of the prettiest feet in the world. A glance from the slipper to the window transfixed me. There was a

beautiful, frightened young female, gazing down upon me as if in supplication for the offence of the fallen slipper. Imagine anything better, ye writers of melodrama!—it was the fair face of my charming incognita—the unknown lady of my love. It was her invitation, doubtless, which I had so abruptly declined! Are we not poor, blind mortals?—and who so blind as mortals in love? I did not speak; I really believe I was *frightened*. So was she, probably, for almost in an instant, while I stood looking confusedly at the form above me, “like the lightning,” it was gone. It might have been a delusion, but then I had in my hand the slipper. It was as palpable as the slipper of Cinderella, and as pretty, too. How a lady came to drop a slipper out of a chamber window, except by *design*, may seem singular; this slipper, in every sense of the word, however, was in the course of being embroidered on the instep with a rose, and I *presume* that the pretty embroideress having leaned somewhat too

forward from the window for the advantage of the evening light, had met with the accident in question; how else could such an accident have possibly occurred? But how was this pretty slipper to be restored? Should I send it in by the servant?—should I send it by my brother?—*ought* I return it myself?—*dared* I?—had I the courage? Like Master Slender, I was afraid I had *not*.

I might have written a sonnet. What an opportunity! I invariably lost such opportunities. Sonnet on restoring a lady's slipper. But I wrote *no* sonnet, and after asking my *mother*—for women are, especially in *such* cases, our best advisers—what I ought to do, she replied that I ought to knock at the lady's door with some very polite message, &c. I followed my mother's advice, but that so awkwardly and lamely, I am quite sure if the servant who opened the door to me had not been aware of who I was, she must have supposed from my agitation that I had come thither to steal

something out of the hall, if not to rob the house. The message I delivered was, I should say, inaudible; and the relief to my agitation on escaping from the door, such as those who have never been in a similar situation would find perfectly unimaginable.

A moment of retreat and reflection hastily restored my pitiable state of equilibrium, and my sanity. I reproached myself contemptuously for my ridiculous consternation at the open gate of my Eden. Dazzled by its radiance, I had not even listened to "the silver bells within." One conviction only consoled me. *She* knew that I had written some *rational* lines; that they had been published; therefore I did hope she might come to a more charitable conclusion than to write me down a fool; although I have since learned from tried experience to think that a man *may* be a poet and a fool at the same time—at all events so far as concerns his own interest in worldly matters.

I was heartily ashamed of myself, and made a thousand notable resolutions to recover, as speedily as possible, the opportunity I had lost, but how? She would assuredly despise, laugh at me! In this way I tormented my unhappy self, for days together, stealing frequently into the garden, under the friendly shadow of the laburnums and lilacs, to see if I could not gain another glance of my Peri, and lay hold of her wings, or catch another slipper in my arms: but my Peri had disappeared, I had frightened her away: she was gone! I became fretful, anxious, ill. My mother discovered, to her great sorrow, that "her poor *boy*" was in love, though with whom she could not guess, and only hoped it was not with some designing minx, who had waylaid his innocent heart, for at the age of *grown-up*, when I thought myself much more of a man than I do at present, my poor mother always spoke of me as a mere child, and called me "Boy" to the day of her death.

At length this young lady and I *did* meet : her name I discovered was Adelaide. —what a name for the mistress of a poet ; Adelaide, how germanic ! and our meeting equally romantic, not to be surpassed by Petrarch and his divine Laura, or Faust and the beautiful Margaret, or any of those first delicious interviews of lovers, described by the poets, either of ancient or modern days.

It was a still, summer evening, our little garden glittered all blossoms and perfume. It had been carefully put in order that day, and the gardener had planted in it a variety of new and beautiful flowers. I remember there were carnations of the most exquisite colours ; their bright vermillion hue, near the little side door, inserted in the wall, which the gardener had neglected to close, attracted me to enter that unusual way. I had been out nearly all the day rambling in the country. A light step in an adjoining covered walk, that is, covered by a few roses, induced me to turn

in a contrary direction, to surprise her—I thought to have surprised my mother. It was the young lady of the embroidered slipper; she neither drew back, blushed, nor started at the sight of me. I thought, for I had the courage to look in her face this time, that I almost detected a lurking smile at my awkwardness and embarrassment at this unlooked for interview. Perhaps I blushed, and I was very bashful; of course, one of us must speak to the other, the rule of the drama required that it should have been the gentleman; I am afraid, for the credit of chivalry, to confess almost, that it was the lady. There was something of a fallen rose, there was a something of an awkward running a thorn into one's own finger, in picking the rose up and holding it in one's own hand, of suddenly recollecting that the same rose belonged to the lady, and presenting it, and hearing indistinctly the words "Thank you, *sir*,—I—"

Here the gentle speaker stopped, the pause ought to have been filled up by

another voice. It was, by that of my mother, who suddenly emerged from another part of the garden, with a bouquet which she had been selecting for the purpose of presenting it herself to her fair guest, whom she had almost accidentally invited in, at the open garden gate, to look at the new carnations.

“ Ah! this is my *boy!*” laughed my mother, by way of introduction, although at that period, be it known, I was full five feet eleven; and the young lady made a curtsy, still smiling, as she *could* smile, while her merry blue eyes glanced, as Wombell would have said, from the crown of my head to the tip of my heel. I believe I had the courage to present my mother's bouquet, with a few words, and the ice once broken, I could give as good an account of myself as any other individual of my species. The young lady did not refer to the adventure of the slipper, nor did she display any sort of emotion, whereby I might have hoped that I had made some

sort of an impression. My vanity was a little piqued at this, and I do not believe that the impression of our first interview was by any means so satisfactory, as the rainbow dreams of fancy had promised. I was almost sorry to find my exquisite ideal, only a mortal after all; it was something like the feeling, after having seen Carlotta Grisi balancing herself on a sunflower, to seeing her seated in an arm-chair, like any other human being. In the disturbed slumbers of that night, many a sweet delusion, however, stole over me; in which the object of my admiration hovered before me in a fairy form, and the music of her voice fell like the holy harmony of distant sabbath bells upon my ear. This was but a foretaste of that mitigating voice which was to exist for me as a charm, as it did through many unlooked for anxieties, cares, and sorrows.

But I must proceed with my narrative, which, though partaking greatly of romance, will still prove itself to be a not over-

wrought picture of real life, and circumstances, as they actually seemed, in the midst of the busy stirring world, where truth but too frequently indeed assumes an exterior, how much more strange than fiction.

From the period of our first interview, as our families became more and more intimately acquainted, I had more and more opportunities of witnessing the development of the many rare woman's qualities which my future wife possessed, to say nothing of her good looks, and they were *very* good; she had received a first rate education, her mind was endowed with a pure taste, and, although she could not, perhaps, have written one line of poetry, or have twisted a sentence in a drama, she had all the capability of *judging* with an unerring opinion between merit and the contrary. As a pianist her performance was perfect for a private gentlewoman,* her

* Her instructor had been the elder Parnel, whose lessons were always given on the violin. How much light

singing equally so. Nothing could have surpassed her ballad singing, natural, and so full of feeling.

How she came to form an equal attachment to one so uncouth, comparatively speaking, as myself, is a matter which I could never clearly understand; yet, that she did so, and most devotedly, the sequel of this narrative will go far enough amply to prove, and I dread to think, far to prove also, that her health, if not her *life*, was seriously endangered, *if not sacrificed*, by the too nervous excitement which she permitted to overcome her delicate feelings, in her unceasing anxiety for me, through the various trials of my chequered life.

Not to dwell too long upon common-place circumstances, in a word we were married at the Cathedral Church, Norwich—the happiest of brides and bridegrooms—posted

did she not cast over my dull taste for music, which I found so beneficial to me in after years, when I became to be acquainted with such men as Hawes, Bishop, Balfe, Wallace, Rodwell, Rees, Loder, and all the rest of the Harmonious Choir.

off for Yarmouth, my brother riding on horseback—remember he was a sailor—before us, and setting the bells ringing at every town or village he went through, to our *cost*, though of that we thought nothing, being, as Buckstone says, “too joyous for anything.” I only recollect that one untoward circumstance occurred to us all the journey, and that was, my brother’s horse stooping suddenly to drink, as he was passing a stream, capsised him over the bows, as he phrased it, and sluiced his top rigging. However, as his top rigging was not damaged, at least by the fall, he was by no means offended at our laughing heartily at his misfortune, which was related with double zest at the dinner table at the Wrestler’s Inn.

Oh, happy days of honeymoon ! why, like the delicious extract from which you derive your name, melt ye so speedily away ? or transform the sweet to acid, which should last for ever. Would it were otherwise, then, indeed, were this fair earth, which some men call unsightly, at least a *human*

Paradise, and human feelings nearly allied to those of angels. But it is now clearly comprehensible to my mind, that these things are not permitted us to a great, good end. Should we not be too content else in this world, which is evidently only a state of probation, a great desert, to some happy land where we are to meet again inseparable, in a pure and perfect bliss, as the interruptions which are unceasingly thrown in upon mortal happiness sufficiently tend to suggest, meet happiness where and under whatever form you may. Misfortune, therefore, becomes—oh is it not consoling—our strongest hope, our brightest promise of “another and a better world” And so it is; the Almighty works His wondrous marvels through man’s short-sightedness, and the bereavement we oft too bitterly complain of, is mercifully no doubt that which eventually brings about our future redemption, our eternal weal.

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CHAPTER V.

THE first piece of folly that I was guilty of, sometime after my marriage, was to set up a printing office of my own, in the market place in Norwich, and *attempt* to establish a magazine. This speculation failed altogether; I received little or no encouragement, and, although I had many contributors, whose works were well worthy of public attention, Norwich was not the place, and it was quite evident that I did not fully understand the taste of the Norwich people, at least, so far as publishing a magazine went, because I should be unjust to say that they did not appreciate my little talent, under another form, viz., under a dramatic form.

I cannot call to mind whether it was before or after my marriage, that I wrote a

tragedy called "Edwin." It was founded on the late Miss Edgeworth's popular novel of the Scottish Chiefs: it was produced at Norwich, and my old acquaintance, Frederick Vining played "Edwin," the hero of my piece; it was quite satisfactory to me, that he did not recognize in its author, the young rustic hero of Bury St. Edmund's. But I recall to memory here, that one of the first productions of mine, on any stage, must have been an address written and introduced into a well known piece, "The Naval Pillar," and spoken with immense applause, by Mrs. W. Clifford, (late of the Haymarket Theatre,) in the character of Britannia.* "Edwin," however, was my first play, it was a *serious* undertaking at all events, five acts. It was George Coleman,

* I pause here, to pay a small tribute to this excellent actress, (the mother-in-law of Mr. W. Harrison, our great English tenor, of whom I shall have much to say in my second volume,) she played for me in a tragedy which I also perpetrated in Norwich, called *Antigone*: she was the *Antigone*. In a few years after she played for me in London, Mariette in the *Floating Beacon*, and Wardock Kennilson, at the Surry Theatre, in the melo-drama of that

I think, who observed that he could imagine nothing more awful than Act 1, Scene 1; but in the outset of life, it is astonishing how we gallop over difficulties. I shall say little of my second *tragedy* of "Edwin," except that it was represented several consecutive nights, a thing very unusual in the country, or rather out of London, and that it was received with much greater favour than my magazine, which, after two or three numbers, had descended most quietly to the tomb of all the Capulets, and no questions asked, "no reckoning made, but sent to its account, with all its imperfections on its head."*

name, both with equal success. She was the best queen in Hamlet, I ever beheld, and still equally great in Mrs. Candor; her elocutionary power perfect, and at the same time a *wit*. Being once in a gipsy party in Lord ——— Park in Norfolk, with her and about twenty others, there was an elderly *Miss* of fifty, who wished to be mistaken for fifteen, I [called her a rose, a *primrose* was Mrs. Clifford's sly retort.

* It was satirically said of me by a sly old critic, even in this early stage of practice, that I displayed a precosity of tact by leaving one person living at the end of my tragedies, to give out the play for the ensuing night.

I afterwards produced, in the Theatre Royal Norwich, my *third* tragedy, "Bertha," Bertha, by the celebrated Miss Norton, an excellent actress. I am not supplied with bills nor dates to tell in what succession these pieces followed, nor do I think it of the slightest importance to futurity. I am sure many of my readers will be only too much surprised at my audacity, in ever having attempted to produce a *tragedy* at any time, under any form. My next perpetration threw me more into my own level, "The Ruffian Boy," a melodrama founded on Mrs. Opie's interesting tale. It was quite a hit, thanks to Mrs. Opie's name and celebrity, and was played with equal success round the circuit. Frederick Vining (again,) the Ruffian Boy. Tom Dibdin also wrote a piece on this subject.

I remember this little drama with the more especial pleasure, as it introduced me to the notice of Mrs. Opie. I was one

evening at a concert, at the then New Concert Room, when she came in. Every eye turned towards her ; she was worshipped in society, not only for her great talent and her polished manners, but for her peculiar beauty, which could not fail to strike even a stranger. She always reminded me of a lovely Bacchante, it was so voluptuous, yet so delicate and feminine, especially when she sang, which she did, sweetly, and accompanied herself mostly with the pedal part. Her singing the lines on the death of Sir John Moore was affecting to the last degree. Judge of my confusion, when, in an instant, I saw her eye directed through her glass at me. It was quite evident she knew me, as she was making her way towards the place I occupied, and eventually sat herself down, almost by my side. The first act of the concert ended : she spoke to me.

“ Mr. Ball, I think ? ”

“ That is my name madam, at your service,” of course with an awkward attempt

at a profound bow, and a little confusion, struggling to seem otherwise.

“ You are the author of the new melo-drama, forthcoming to-morrow evening, ‘ The Ruffian Boy,’ I understand.”

As this enquiry was made, as I imagined, in rather a displeased tone, I was almost afraid to acknowledge myself, and no doubt, rather coloured than replied, which she observing, promptly continued, “ I wish you all possible success,” then *very* abruptly, “ I shall not go and see it ”

“ I am sorry,” I replied timidly, though with some adroitness, “ if, by selecting that interesting subject, I have offended her whom it was my strongest desire to please.”

Softening, and blushing in her turn, “ Offended !” she reiterated, “ Oh no, I am so far from being offended, that I shall send several of my friends to witness its representation, and as I am assured that you have already displayed a remarkable dramatic skill in your previous productions,

I have no doubt but your drama will be very successful."

Here the second part of the concert commenced. At the conclusion, Mrs. Opie's carriage being announced, with a graceful courtesy and an amiable smile, she withdrew.

"The Ruffian Boy" was produced with an unusual *éclat*, and Mrs. Opie, being with a large party of gentry in the stage box, was amongst the first to witness and applaud its performance. One of the most decided points in this drama was a part played by a Mr. Williams as a mad boy, in which he sang snatches of wild songs with a thrilling effect. Vining, also, was inimitable, and Miss Norton. Such a piece now produced in London, *so played*, would run one hundred nights at least, although it contained neither a lottery, nor blue fire for a finale.

It must have been about this time, before or after, that I forwarded a melodrame to the Surrey Theatre, called "Edda." Tom Dibdin was the manager. It was accepted,

and played many nights. *The Miss Taylor* played Edda. There is nothing like her acting now remaining on the stage. Dibdin speaks of this piece in his memoirs, and I must in my turn step a little out of my path to do a something of grateful justice to the memory of my dear, kind old friend, Tom Dibdin. For ever involved in pecuniary troubles, it was almost impossible to tell what his true character would have been had his circumstances been different. He was a manager and an author, as every one knows. In his management he was kind-hearted—in his authorship void of selfishness or envy; and although he wrote well himself, and with an extraordinary facility, it by no means deterred him from appreciating and bringing forward the *works* of *others*, as I, who was an entire stranger, owed to him my first introduction to a London audience, have an undoubted right to assert. “Fazio” was also a work whose merits it was his tact to discover; and he did not, as some who succeeded him

in management would have done, substitute his own name for the real author's, and by altering lines, and giving a garbled sense to the original, *make it his own*. But I always thought the public more to blame in these respects than the Midasses who usurped the dignity too oft beyond their decently assuming. In other countries they would be differently requited.

I came to London with my wife to attend rehearsals, and see the representation of Edda. I shall never forget how astonished I was at the vast size of the theatre. I seemed to tread on air; there was an enchantment about it all, more than earthly. The kind, enlightened, facetious manager; the amiable manageress; the performers—I thought them scarcely inferior to demi-gods; the beautiful scenery; the exciting rehearsals! How enchanting!—what a delusion!

One thing struck me as strange—Bengough and Clifford, disputed about a phrase in the drama. One said it should

be the "mounting sun," the other the "mountain sun," yet neither referred to me, the author. "How is this?" I inquired aside of Mr. Dibdin. "My dear lad," was Dibdin's facetious reply, "each is afraid that you should set him right." I also produced in Norwich my tragedy of "Antigone." The part of Antigone by Mrs. William Clifford.

In the meantime, business, and the printing office, under the direction of a superintendent, went on but indifferently: Not unlike the farm when I left it in the hands and superintendence of my brother, who could never make it "ship-shape," he said. I will not dilate upon this. My partial success in town as a dramatist had led me astray to reckon upon a far more agreeable life in London. It was my own wish to attempt it; it was my wife's also, because it was mine; and the success of another melodrama, "The Inkeeper of Abbeville," in Norwich, made up *our* resolution.

Mrs. Opie, too, advised me to this step;

her last injunction to me was, "bear and forbear," and to show how kind and considerate she was to me, as she was to everybody alike, I insert here part of a letter, in which she gives me some good advice :—

" Letters of business cannot be too short.
 " I meant to write to you to tell you that I
 " *hope* you will drink tea with us some
 " afternoon, *soon*. I will send and fix the
 " day. I fear it cannot be *this* week. On
 " Thursday I go to the Palace again ; but,
 " *nous verons*—good night.

" Much yours,

" AMELIA OPIE.

" Edward Ball, Esq."

Miss Macaulay, also, who came down to give her celebrated monodrame at the Theatre, and for whom, at Mrs. Opie's request, I wrote a recitable poem, in humble imitation of Lord Ullin's Daughter—led me to believe that fortune and fame, both, awaited me on the metropolitan boards. This lady was a most singular and extraor-

dinary woman, of great talent, but she imagined herself certainly not less than Mrs. Siddons. Her recitations were perfection—especially her lyric recitation of “Lord Ullin’s Daughter.” Of all the numerous entertainments now going, there is no one superior or equal to Miss Macaulay’s. As an actress, she wanted point, however, and the presence of mind to fill up the character when silent. There was something strange and wild in her conception of every part. Some people imagined that her mind was a little astray at times, and told singular stories of the way in which she had occasionally addressed the audience. Her voice somewhat resembled Rachel’s, and her school was of that kind; but she could also play comedy, and sing comic songs with an especial humour. I was told, as a *monstrosity*, by a lady, that she, (Miss Macaulay,) had once enacted the part of Yarico with naked feet. I can scarcely stretch even my point of imagination so far

as to fancy Yarico with naked feet, but I find it still more difficult to fancy her feet thrust into a pair of tight white satin slippers, which is not uncommon, and which I have seen. Poor Miss Macaulay's attempt to improve the taste of the time was looked upon as deserving little less than a straight jacket. Yet this, absurd as it was, was surely not quite so inconsistent as Garrick playing Macbeth in a gold-laced coat and a bob wig.*

Venafrà, I think it was, came over to this country with beautiful French dancers—ladies. So well as I can recollect, it was during the management of Mr. Charles Kemble, and Captain Forbes, and Mr. Moore; *real* managers—men who had money to speculate with, and paid their

* I remember the first time I saw naked feet represented, (in silk fleshings, of course,) was in a Greek tragedy, "Orestes," at Covent Garden Theatre, and many people disliked the appearance, although it should have reminded them of some of the finest statues in the world; but English taste was very squeamish, even twenty years ago.

losses in those speculations, and who did not shut up the theatre when they had a bad *week*, and call it the end of a *season*. Well, touching these French lady dancers. Silk tights, as they are theatrically called, were then only tolerated at *His Majesty's Theatre*, in the Haymarket : It was then only permitted the aristocracy to be, as old Mrs. Bull called it, *undelicate*. Would it be believed by some of our juveniles, these French ladies were nearly expelled the stage for the very same cause which now sets the theatre in a roar of approbation, and brings down a shower of camellias, azalias, japonicas, and even blushing English roses to their *feet*. See what an enlightened race we have become, thanks to foreigners, whose habits and manners we once so repelled, and who were the first to teach us the "poetry of action."

But I transgress; we had not yet taken leave of the dear, old-fashioned city of Norwich. Partings of all kinds bring back

floods of sad memories, and, therefore, should always be as briefly got over as possible. When it comes to a separation from any one, or anything that time or circumstances have at all attached to us, how the bad will evaporate and the good expand. Doubts, fears, self-reproaches, will arise in spite of ourselves, both as regards the past, and the dark, uncertain future. Remembered benefits, and the esteem of kind hearts lost, glow before us in a new light, and we feel, with a just appreciation, for the first time, how much we are about to leave behind us, all that we loved—oh ! how much better than we ever believed we loved ; and that we ought to have loved yet still how much more !

Farewell then, beloved old Norwich, scene of many a happy triumph, not the less delightful because half imagined. Farewell to your antique castles and turrets, your green Bracondale Hills, your caverns and your silver winding river. Long may those

green and golden hills, those old oak groves, and those daisied banks so beautiful, continue to be frequented by hearts, beating lightly as mine has beaten there, and if such be permitted, I can invoke upon you no greater blessing.

Previously to our quitting Norwich, my brother had, after my marriage, quitted it also, and went to reside in a little cottage at Ixworth, near Bury St. Edmunds, we staid with him and my mother a few days only, and then proceeded on our journey of fame and fortune, (the vain delusion of too many,) to London. I cannot exactly say whether it was on this occasion, or some previous one, that we paid a visit to Barton Hall, the seat of Sir Charles Bunbury; and I simply mention it to shew the high appreciation which this family invariably bestowed upon talent, even of the humblest description : surely it was a mark of distinction to have been invited thither, by Sir Charles himself, as a poet, on whom he wished to

confer the most *solid* commendation, and let me tell you, this, from the friend and patron of Doctor Goldsmith and Mrs. Inchbald, was no mean honour to descend on a head like mine. Excellent Lady Bunbury too, I shall never forget her graciousness, both to myself and my wife, and how she spoke of my dear mother, and of the Rev. Mr. Marker, my mother's first husband, who had been Sir Charles' private chaplain, in the days when Goldsmith was an inmate of the hall. I have often heard my mother speak of Goldsmith, of his pompadour coat, and of his eccentricities. We saw on this occasion, the celebrated horse, which won Sir Charles so many thousands. I hope the jockey club will not quarrel with me for not, at this moment, recollecting its name, *perhaps* it was Smolensko. Lady Bunbury, once so lovely, as report and her portrait in the drawing-room bespeak, was now a martyr to the rheumatism, and quite incapable of rising from her chair. So it is, the truly good are sometimes to be the most afflicted.

We must not, as Christians, question why, we can only bend in submission to the Great Disposer of all things, submit and be silent. It is our duty and the best and wisest.*

* Of this excellent lady, the story (told me by my mother,) is very interesting, notwithstanding her rheumatism, she had been a perfect heroine of romance. Her innocent village beauty, when a child, particularly attracted the notice of Lady Sarah Bunbury, (Sir Charles' first wife), her name was Cocksedge, I think. Lady Sarah not only received, but generously educated her like a gentlewoman, and when the former deserted the hall and her husband, to share the fortunes of another, in every respect far inferior to the man she had forsaken, she took Miss Cocksedge with her, but they had not proceeded far in the carriage, when, as if suddenly touched with remorse or compassion for her excellent husband, she observed with emotion, that he would be very lonely in her absence, and, ordering the carriage to be stopped, she requested Miss Cocksedge to alight and return to Sir Charles, and confer on him every kind attention. Miss Cocksedge did as she was requested, and afterwards became Lady Bunbury, in the place of her not unkind-hearted benefactress, the best of wives, as she was one of the best of women, and, the deserved, future happiness of Sir Charles was fully confirmed by the true affection of this most excellent lady.

CHAPTER VI.

LONDON is at length before us; London, mighty incomprehensible London, which rises out of its dim smoke, like a vast Babylon, under the potent incantation of some dark wizard's wand. St. Paul's, the Monument, and Westminster Abbey seeming to point as you approach them, (by the coach) the first features of an indefinable outline. A ride up Whitechapel, in those days, had in it nothing to inspire bright imagery in the dreary mind of a young poetical visionary.

I had met with great losses in business, probably, had I neglected business less, I *might* have been more successful; *mais*, as the French have it, I could not make myself

what I was *not*, I could not divest my heart of feelings, which hurried me on like a steam engine, to my *destiny*. I listened to the cautious advice of the worldly-minded, and resolved to take it, but I could not. Miss Kelly, *the* Fanny Kelly, once told me that the smell of the stage lamps quite upset her reason for all rational advice opposed to stage-like things; I can both understand and believe it; one is born with certain notions and ideas, and how can we fly from ourselves, as Sir Walter Scott said "Put the kettle on the fire, and bid it not boil." We see nothing of the chequered road before us, we see only the rose leaves with which young fancy strews and covers it, and the more we hear of the hidden serpents under our rose leaves, the more we disbelieve, and wish to tempt the dangerous and mysterious peril. It is well it is so, perhaps, or the world would be all one colour, one taste, one propensity. There is a certain spell, as it were, for ever operating, like the odour of the stage

lamps, as Miss Kelly observed, upon the mind towards which the mind itself is fated like the sunflower to turn. As the phrenologists have it, if our our bumps are so very different, how is it possible our thoughts or ideas should be the same. I believe that man *is* a *free* and *independent* agent, so far as right and wrong is concerned, but I almost begin to think, from the moment of our creation, that we are constitutioned to a certain inclination in life, as the willow is to bend over a stream, and I much doubt, provided that inclination be not a vicious one, however many difficulties and much sorrow it may have brought upon us, whether it be not, in the end, the happiest course we could possibly have pursued. Therefore, let us not be too unhappy, let us not imagine that we could have done better, we are neither our own keepers, nor our own agents, and if the result be not exactly what the more sunny outset led us to expect, it is consoling, at least to remember

that the man who, through reverse of circumstances, retains a clear conscience, retains at least *one* invaluable jewel which no one can tear from him, not even fate. The astronomer would almost want bread ere he would cease to reckon the stars. The mariner would prefer to face death, rather than forego the sublimity of the deep; the traveller, who has endured every mortal suffering under heaven, will return eagerly to the scene of his peril, even when he might enjoy every comfort and tranquillity in his native land. Ask any one of those men if his time were to come over again, notwithstanding the various difficulties, the excitement and misfortunes by which he was hunted, and a thousand times well nigh devoured, whether he would forego the same course, for a life of ease and independence? He will answer you, *no*, and tell you that *his was the* independence, the independence of ambition, enterprise, or of the heart's gratification, which gold could neither purchase nor pay

for.* Therefore your actor, with his scanty paltot, and your author, with his fresh half quire under his arm, are neither of them, after all, so much to be pitied, as those capon lined worthies, who nearly ride over them in their blazoned carriages, imagine ; I much question whether either the one or the other would exchange notions or positions for the possession of the Mogul Empire. So according to Doctor Panglos, it is clearly *all for the best*, which I think should be a lesson to parents, not to thwart so much the inherent inclinations or propensities of their children, but to find out the surest means of turning them to good account. Every poor man has it not in his power to do much towards promoting the intellect of his progeny, but in this age of *liberal* education, much *is* to be done, and the mind once properly set going, will do marvels, in its *own way*, for itself. We

* But what *is* it my friend Sheridan Knowles has to say in such superior language, on this subject, respecting the old mariner who forswears the deep and its boisterous murmurs, yet builds his cabin within the sound of its waves.

have seen that in so many remarkable instances of genius, that it requires little or no illustrating, yet I must be allowed to record one instance. I knew a lad, the son of a very humble bookbinder in Norwich, who displayed a great precosity in the acquirement of languages, and frequently, when he ought to have been sewing the books for a maintenance, his father has found him over the foldless press, trying to make himself acquainted with some certain stray pages of the Latin Grammar. What was to be done? It was a *propensity*, a laudable one. But they were poor people, and on the daily, nay, hourly earnings of this son, much depended for the support of their little family. These good parents, however, did not beat their son, they did not even chide him, but they mourned secretly over the hopelessness of his disposition to *learn*, because they wanted the means to carry his inclinations into execution, as the merits of the case deserved, while they felt that it would induce him to

neglect, if not despise, his more humble but certain calling. At length, however, the mother, (women are always the first in domestic enterprise,) made an application to one or two worthy people, who shook their heads, but nevertheless subscribed to render assistance. The son was sent to a good school; the father toiled with double diligence, to supply his place at the binding press.

The effort succeeded to admiration. The lad, thrown into the current of his own disposition, became rapidly a fine classic scholar, and in a few years taught as head master in one of the first seminaries in the kingdom. He is now the Rev. Doctor ———, and his erudite and splendid works are before the public, both for their instruction and admiration.

At the recommendation of my friend Mrs. Opie, I did not make an attempt to sustain myself by literature, or the drama, but, with a letter of introduction written by herself, took a position in one of the

first printing offices in London. My stay there was very brief, not from any distaste, either on my part, or the part of my employers, who treated me with the greatest respect and deference, but a little bit of destiny, what else shall I call it, followed me, even into this place. A Mr. Payne, who had formerly gone down to Norwich to "star it"—as the London theatricals term playing in the country—during his stay in the theatre, saw my melo-drama of "The Innkeeper of Abbeville," in rehearsal; he had seen me on the stage, and coming accidentally into this printing office, recognised me with some surprise, so much so, that he approached, with an apology for addressing me. Of him I had not the slightest knowledge or recollection, but we speedily became acquainted, I remembered having seen him enact the part of Hamlet.

He enquired flatteringly, how it happened, with my abilities as a dramatist, that I *condescended* to accept a situation of

any kind, when I might be my own master, and live as a gentleman. My answer was, that I knew no manager, except Mr. Dibdin, and he had then quitted the management of a theatre.

"*You require no introduction,*" was the prompt reply, "send your piece which I saw, "*The Innkeeper of Abbeville,*" to the Surrey, Watkins Burroughs is too good a judge not to bring it out, *directly.*" I thanked this stranger and did as he requested me. Watkins Burroughs did bring out the piece, it made a hit, ran upwards of a hundred consecutive nights; but by no chance did I ever see this Mr. Payne again, nor could I hear of him, despite every enquiry.

From the production of this drama, "*The Innkeeper of Abbeville,*" I date my reign of scenes and vicissitudes, as a dramatic author, for it was, really, honestly speaking and without affectation, puffing or claqueurs, truly successful, and has since been played in every theatre in the united

kingdom, is playing now, and also in America with equal effect. Bengough, Sam Chapman, and Miss Huddart, since the queen of the stage, Mrs. Warner (died Sep., 1854) played in it, and all exquisitely well; Sam Chapman made the part of Ozzrand peculiarly his own. Cooke, (not T. P.) from over zeal, nearly upset me on the first night, by rushing on as Dyrkille, and saying that he had left the murdered count in a *dish* instead of a *ditch** This, however, was no greater blunder than is made still, in *Troilus and Cressida*, where they speak of a fruit in an "unwholesome *disk*." Surely Shakspeare wrote *ditch*. I know in the orchard at Burwell, we had a splendid pear tree which hung over what they called an unwholesome *ditch*, and many a longing

* *Dyrkille*. "Why man, the stranger's dead, as we have thrown him into that *ditch*, and covered him over with branches, &c."—*Innkeeper of Abbeville*. Act 2. Scene 2.

Had he made this mistake in "*Troilus and Cressida*," it would have been correcting an error to the same tune.

"Like a ripe fruit in an unwholesome dish,"
Should be—in an unwholesome *ditch*.

eye have I cast into the dingy mud, at the fallen luscious yellow pears, which lay there untouched and untasted, except by the marauding wasps, to which nothing *is* unwholesome.

I wish, here, to give a little dissertation on the difference of the theatres and the drama at the period when I commenced writing and now. What a change has come over our present free-trade sort of stage. In fact, it is just the difference between *something* and *nothing*. We had then a stage; now we have not. The reason is obvious—there were then certain people for certain things, and certain theatres for certain performances: everyone had a chance. Now they seem always on the look-out to snap up each others ideas, to eat up each others thoughts. I sometimes think that the drama must remain in a needy, uncertain state, till every theatre be licensed by the Lord Chamberlain to a certain style of performance. Here tragedy, there comedy; here melodrama, there opera; here water,

there horses. Then we should have a school for each individual talent, and many different sets and sorts of performers would necessarily be employed and paid; as the public *must* then go to certain theatres to see a certain thing. Instead of opera, farce, and horses, in a spectacle, at one house, let each belong to its own cast, by which regulation every manager would have a chance of encouragement according to his merits, and the peculiarity of his performance. Legitimacy never seems to me at its ease except at Old Drury or Covent Garden, or, rather, what in my early days, was Covent Garden. When the old English Covent Garden was let to Italians, for Grand Italian Opera, they made such a transformation of it, that Charles Kemble, coming on the stage, just after the alterations were finished for the new Italian Opera, exclaimed—"But we let you Covent Garden Theatre—what the devil have you done with it?" While another, a great

man, looked silently, mournfully around, and *wept*.

This fine second Italian Opera, exquisite as it is, having so much merit to recommend it, and those execrable casinos, and low, shilling concerts, none of them existed when I first began to write, consequently the English drama was in a far more healthy and demandable state. Translations were not so much relished by English taste, perhaps not so well done as now.

I by no means object to the import of foreign abilities. A clear deck and fair fight is, and ever will be my motto. But favour should be equal on both sides, which is *not* the case. The highest people, I regret deeply to say, the aristocracy especially, give little encouragement to their own. No national impulse brings them to our theatres, and while that is the case, we can expect no *rising* native talent. Genius which presents itself under the barbarous names of Brown, Green, or Smith, be it ever so violet-like,

is left to pine under the nettles at the corner of the garden of misfortune, while the exotic, under whatever name it assume, is carefully trailed, pampered, hot-housed, and nurtured with gold dust. This, to say the least of it, is *impolitic*, even on the part of the legislature, which affects to treat, with a smile of contempt the English drama and its supporters, or adjuncts. But let me be bold enough to assert that there never was, yet, a great nation without a great national theatre, where fine and noble sentiments, and moral lessons, better relished by the million, than those more severe ones promulgated from the altar itself, formed ever a people great and glorious—a method which they understood, and by which they best liked to be taught.

These remarks, written long since, have almost ceased to be applicable; at least, happily, only to the times in which they were written, for a great friend to native talent has risen, like a radiant star, since

then, above the horizon of the native drama, to encourage it by her golden smiles, in the person of our wise and gracious Queen, who is invariably the first to discover merit and encourage it. Her frequent visits to the theatres have done them the greatest good; everything on the stage is of late vastly improved—taste, elegance, refinement, and, though last, not least, morality.

I really feel, with a foresighted Frenchman, that the first symptom of a decaying nation is *the decline* of her *national MORAL drama*.

It was after the long run of Dibdin's uncommonly successful hit of "The Heart of Mid Lothian," so exquisitely produced, and so exquisitely acted in all its characters and departments, that Sir Walter Scott wrote his celebrated novel of Nigel, which I was called upon by Mr. Watkins Burroughs to dramatise for the Surrey Theatre. Dibdin could dramatise a novel in a day or two, I was compelled to take a week, and was the first to have my piece in rehearsal—another

version being underweigh for Covent Garden, by Pocock; his, however, was a drama in blank verse, which could not, of course, be hastily dismissed—mine a simple adaptation. Watkins Boroughs enacted the part of Nigel, Bengough the King, which on account of the Scotch dialect he was dreadfully afraid to undertake, and Buckingham was cast the part of the Miser. We had also Mrs. Glover's two daughters, both very young and very pretty, as Margaret Ramsay and Mrs Christie, one of them having never made her appearance on the stage. The scenery was painted by *the* Wilson as well as scenery could be painted.

The greatest confidence was placed in me by the manager. As young soldiers sometimes do at the outset of a campaign, I had shown a certain tact in my presence of mind, which quite struck and pleased him. It was during the last rehearsal of the Inkeeper of Abbeville; some one made the remark that it terminated tamely, and like a melodrama which was running at

another house. I immediately, on the stage, suggested the alteration as it is now played, and which proved both novel and effective. Nevertheless, Nigel was a far heavier, and a first piece. I trembled at my own responsibility. Getting up a three act piece, too, in those days was rendered a much more important affair than now ; or, at least, I thought so. Everybody concerned was deeply in earnest *then*. As the vast scenes were pushed into sets, imperfectly painted, and the different costumes and properties were brought in, piece by piece, on the arms of the tailor or tailoress, to be approved of by the manager, I could scarcely believe myself of sufficient importance to be the agitator of all this mighty commotion. Mrs. Glover, seeing my apprehension and nervous state, was afraid that I doubted the success of my play, and came kindly up to me with a cricket between her finger and thumb. "Look here," said she, with one of her sweet encouraging smiles, "I have just picked up this merry little

cricket on the stage, a *certain sign* of good luck wherever it is found. You'll be sure not only to succeed, but to make a decided hit." Bengough was not so sanguine, still afraid of the Scotch dialect; and poor Buckingham, so nervous with the Miser, he could come to no conclusion whatever, and would gladly have been transformed into the good-boding cricket itself.

June, 1822. The night arrived. The theatre crowded to suffocation—boxes, pit, and gallery. Sir Walter Scott's works were then not only the fashion, but the rage, and to see them in a dramatic form still more so. The enormous success of Mr. Dibdin's "Heart of Mid Lothian," led many to suppose that any succeeding piece must prove a failure, especially in the hands of a young, inexperienced author. Fortunately, for me, they were mistaken. The cricket was successful.

I had the little private box R.H. the gallery, which remains there still; my dear wife was with me, more frightened than

alive. For me, I never suffered, with all my sensitiveness, when the curtain was *once up*. The great delusion which came over me, as beings which had floated so frequently before the imagination, crossed and recrossed my sight in apparent reality, lulled every fear to sleep, and I had hitherto in my brief career, been lucky enough to have received nothing but applause. The same and still greater success attended me in "The Fortunes of Nigel." Nothing ever went off more smoothly, or was received with greater favour.

Burroughs seemed formed for Nigel, Bengough surpassed himself in the King, and Buckingham, from an actor scarcely known, became so popular as the Miser, that frequently after, that one scene in which he was so truly great was given for him alone. Then there were the two young Miss Glovers, so youthful, so captivating, so all that could be desired, that they won every heart, not to forget a tribute due to the excellence of Miss Bence, who enacted

the grim Martha to the life ; she was a perfect picture for Sir Walter to have admired. The piece ran ninety-six consecutive nights, and brought in that time, when the price of admission was much higher, a vast sum of money. If these accounts should seem a little exaggerated, let the reader reflect that they are now written from memory only, and dictated by a mind which has ceased longer to regard even the vanity which excites enthusiasm, and that the author only wishes to record *facts*, simply and nearly as they occurred, for the amusement of readers.

As a melo-dramatic writer, with what was called "a *freshness of style*," I became at once popular. The papers spoke of me with the greatest indulgence ; and in the course of a few nights after the production of Nigel, I received a note from Mr. Egerton, then manager of Sadler's Wells Theatre, wishing me to write a part for Mrs. Egerton, and enclosing me an order for a private box, that I might go and see

her perform, which I did, Madge Wildfire in "The Heart of Mid Lothian," and a matchless piece of acting it was. I was enchanted. I had been brought up in the country, and had seen just such a woman as she made it; that sly cunning which peeped through all her trouble, was so perfect, so crafty, yet so innocent—it is not to be described. The sunburnt face, the wild disposition of her attire, her mirth at entrapping her tormentor of the Tollbooth, and the tone of her voice in telling them they were "A pair o' the deevil's pets," contrasted with the wild, desolate broken-heartedness of "Oh Lord!" over the grave of her child, are fragrant memories, not speedily to pass away. She was a great, though a somewhat peculiar and constrained actress. Her Meg Merrilies was equal in its tone, I have been told by those who had seen Mrs. Siddons, to that lady's Lady Macbeth. And though, in latter years, I have seen Miss Cushman with all her merits, they were but leaves strewn on the grave of the other.

I felt myself not a little proud of having been already selected to write a part for an actress of so much talent as Mrs. Egerton ; and when I was introduced to her in her fantastic attire behind the scenes by her excellent husband, for there never was a more excellent one, the matted dishevelment of her long hair, the paint upon her face, the straw and wild flowers, in clusters, over her patched garments, I could scarcely believe myself speaking to a manageress, and I am afraid the *real* admiration I felt would have been far better expressed by language more artificial.

It was agreed that I should breakfast with them next morning, and decide, if possible, on some part which we should think most likely she would excel in. I had already made up *my* mind what that part should be, but I did not reveal my idea till I saw them again ; and, when I did see them again, I was almost too staggered in my opinion to do so.

My location was then in Upper Stamford

Street, Waterloo Road, which, at that time, was rather a rural place; a pond and large elm trees where the church now stands; the windows of my drawing-room commanding a clear view of the doors of the Cobourg Theatre—now one indefinable mass of intersecting streets. The distance was great; I was not very early at my appointment; besides, I did not very well know the way about London, and, on proceeding to Sadler's Wells, was more than once out of my latitude, (no omnibusses); however, I met with a hospitable welcome, late as I was, and made the best excuses I could, considering my astonishment at the sight of my heroine, whom I had supposed, the night previously, to be a young woman of about twenty-two. I found, instead, a middle-aged lady, seated at a table with spectacles on, darning a silk stocking. She noticed my surprise, understood it, and laughed most heartily.

I suggested the character I wished to write for her—it was *Joan of Arc*. It struck

both of them as being an excellent idea ; terms were agreed upon, and I returned home to write.

The Egertons were trying people to work with ; they would do and undo a hundred things in a scene ; the lady in particular, was fastidious to an extreme degree, or nervous ; not with a desire to torment or give trouble, for they were most excellent persons. I wish we had one or two such managers remaining. They had no pomposity !—no affectation !—no *fustian* !—no pretence ! All they did or advised was from a *sincere* wish to advantage the author as well as themselves. I adhered to their advice, and, by so doing, generally brought them imperceptibly to my own opinions, and secured both their friendship, and our mutual success. There are many, I have no doubt, who will remember the production of “Joan of Arc,” and its magnificence at Sadler’s Wells, and its fine scenery by Greenwood. Poor Greenwood ! he was what is called, in cockney parlance, a regular

"chaffer," and liked a harmless piece of satire most amazingly. One morning while I was standing by him, admiring the progress of his work, he abruptly turned round and asked me whether I had ever heard of such an old fellow as Virgil, or his poetry? My unsophisticated reply was equally abrupt—

"Tityre tu patule recubans
Sub tegmine fagi——"

which seemed to take Greenwood so by surprise, that he nearly let the brush fall with which he was painting the scene. I never could define what this meant, but, as from that instant he became a most ardent friend, I imagined that I had made, *somehow*, one of those little hits in a circle of the heart which it has been my good fortune to make in the esteem of many very eccentric men in a very eccentric way, on many occasions. Perhaps, my accidentally knowing *something* of Virgil stopped Greenwood in some prompt reply. My mother used to tell a story of a lady who requested a young

dandy student to construe a phrase in Latin for her. Looking at the phrase, the young scholar shook his head. "I find it impossible to translate it," said he, affectedly twisting his moustache, "it is only dog's Latin, after all." "Dog's Latin," retorted the lady, "then it surprises me still more that a *puppy* should not understand his own language." If the scholar had been up in his part, this fine repartee would have been lost, which had been a pity.

"Joan of Arc" ran the rest of the season—120 nights—and was even afterwards removed to the Olympic, and played many nights more. Of Mrs. Egerton's acting the papers spoke in the highest terms. They could not honestly have done otherwise. The almost supernatural manner which she could assume, and did assume, both in Madge Wildfire and Meg Merrilies, told amazingly in Joan of Arc, and gave a romance, and almost an awful dignity to the character, which threw it out of the canvas beyond every other person on the

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scene, in the most vivid and startling colours. Her upcast eyes, inspired, as it were, with unearthly light, seemed to commune with beings of another world, seen only by herself. Her tone of prophecy thrilled you, while her manner of discovering the king, gave you a belief that deception was an impossibility with a being endowed by heaven itself to bring to pass a great event. There was seldom a dry eye in the house when she uttered these words :

Joan. My father? Is he alive? Oh, now I am, indeed,
Conquered!—fallen! *Act 3, Scene 6.*

At this later period of my life, when I come to glance over the drama of “Joan of Arc,” and see how sketchy it is, I feel almost astonished that so much could possibly have been made out of so little. Campbell played the father with a fine truthfulness. Vale was a young soldier, and Keeley, *the* Keeley, was the comic hero, Valianto, the Pink of the Valley. I see this notice of him in the remarks to Cumberland’s edition of the drama: “Keeley, at that time an

obscure actor, (though how Keeley could ever have been an *obscure* actor, I cannot comprehend,) at Sadler's Wells, first exhibited his comic powers in the village braggadocio, Valianto." The editor must have meant to assert here that Keeley first made a decided feature in the part of Valianto, because, certainly, this was by no means his first appearance on the stage, nor in London. The part was very unworthy of him—I confess it; and this only tends to show that, place genius where you will, like the pure crystal stream, it will still flow on, ascend, and find at last its proper level. Keeley was always a fine actor, he never, from the first moment I knew or saw him, required any assistance but opportunity. I preferred him to Liston, even in Liston's days, in many points. There was less assumption—less of the actor—more left to natural development. But I feel that I tread upon dangerous ground. Keeley ranks now, deservedly so, too highly to require praise:

but it is encouraging to young beginners to see from what a slender root your *true* talent *will* spring up, and eventually hang its rich clusters on the roof top.

Thus far I had proceeded without a single dissentient voice. Very few dramatic writers, of my abilities, or in my platitude, had ever met with more decided success, confining, with all deference, the success to *minor* theatres; which, be it understood at the same time, were infinitely above the *majors* of after days. Thus far, I say, I had succeeded with *éclat*, when an incident happened worth recording, which led me, *at once*, to the Theatre Royal Covent Garden.

Mr. Charles Kemble came over to the Surrey to witness "The Fortunes of Nigel," previously to the bringing out of "The Crown Jewels," (by Pocock,) at his own theatre. It appeared that he was much struck with the Surrey piece; and, on coming down stairs, after its performance,

inquired of the doorkeeper the name of its author.

I was told this, and felt flattered ; but I felt much more so when I received a letter from Mr. Kemble, requesting me to call upon him at the theatre. The Theatre Royal Covent Garden ! Here was an event ! —an event of anxiety, perturbation, and anticipation, both for me and my dear wife. We saw nothing less than a pumpkin turned into a carriage, and mice into horses, in perspective ; and well for us it is, perhaps, that such delusions in this world do help us amazingly through it, but more especially in the hour of misfortune and reverse, as is often the case to all. Next morning I drew myself up to my utmost, although I was remarkably nervous. I would rather have faced any audience than a manager, at *any* time, and my sentiments are still, in that respect, unchanged — unchangeable. Then there was to enter by the stage-door of Covent Garden Theatre. Was I to knock, or ring ? I knew not.

Where it was I knew not. At length I discovered it was in Hart Street, and dreadfully did I require the *heart* to approach it. This was a more formidable ordeal than that of old, with Mr. Hindes, at Bury St. Edmund's, because I had now become conscious of my peril—been on the waves and felt the suffering. There is, (or *was*,) an old post opposite Covent Garden stage-door, in Hart Street; I am grateful to that post, for it sustained my tottering steps, when the flaunting actors, types of the world, “passed me by,” without so much as a look. How stately they appeared!—how high above myself; popping, some of them, in and out of carriages—others entering the theatre on foot, with a strut, as if the whole exchequer had been at the bottom of their boots. One carried a band-box, a white one, striped with blue; you might have sworn that it contained the Pitt diamond. Another a sword in a holland case; it must have been the property of the Emperor of Morocco. I knew not

whom to address ; I addressed the *post*. The post said, or seemed to say, look at me, imitate me—keep your body straight and your head cool, and you'll do. I made the effort, advanced, and was in the hall. It was an uncommonly tall, gaunt man to whom I addressed myself, with an uncommonly red face—as he stepped forward, seeing I was a stranger, to receive, doubtless, any message or communication I had to make. There was a respectful kindness in his look, and all the Kemble-trained servants had *that* look, which gave me new nerve ; so that, between my two newly acquired friends, the post outside the door, and the hall-porter inside, I mustered energy enough to cross *that* stage. But let me digress here a moment. Oh ! for the pen of immortal Dickens to describe the crossing that stage, by a young, enthusiastic dramatist for the first time, on his way to the manager's room. Overland to India is nothing to it. All I had heard—all I had read of the Siddons, or the

Kembles, seemed to rush back into memory at once. And it was on these boards they had so often set their immortal feet! Miss O'Neil, too—Young! and how many more whose great names were sanctified in the deep recesses of my heart. It was to me like the interior of some solemn temple, into which, perhaps, I had been called to assist, and to mingle my footsteps with their footsteps, and to be one day honored and venerated as I honored and venerated them. Had I been told then how soon this temple would pass away, and scarcely one stone be left upon the other, and its ministers, too many of them desolate, what should I have replied? That it was madness to believe it. That the *constitutional* feeling of Englishmen would never allow it. That they would as soon permit the foreigner to desecrate St. Paul's, or Westminster Abbey, as to usurp their national theatres; and yet the foreigner has turned your national theatres inside out, and the philosophic John Bull cares just as much about it as does my

old friend the post at the stage-door, who sticks to one as well as to the other. At length I was in the presence of the most gracious manager that ever breathed—Mr. Charles Kemble. A handsome man he was, of noble bearing, and yet how affable, and his voice like music, the very first note of which made your heart bound, turn, listen, and admire.

A chair was placed for me, and when we were alone, for Farley, I think, was at first in the room. "You are the *highly successful* author of the drama of the 'Fortunes of Nigel,'" were his bland words. Take a lesson *some* of *you* modern managers.

"I did the best my abilities admitted of, sir, and the public have been indulgent enough to receive my poor efforts with *great* favour," was the reply.

"No one could have done it *better*," said he, without seeming to have any wish to flatter.

I became a little confused, and I thought of my old friend the post. "You did me the

honour to go and see it, sir ; I am quite at a loss to thank you for so much condescension."

"No condescension in the least, Mr. Ball, you have nothing to thank me for ; it was a mere matter of business ; we are about to produce the same subject here, and I wished to see what they had done with it at the Surrey. I acknowledge to you, its author, who is so modest, that I was excessively pleased, not more with the acting and getting up, than with your part of the affair ; and I wrote to you to come hither, simply to say to you, that, if you like to direct your talents to our theatre, where, of course, we pay much better, that every attention shall be paid you. Have you anything at present?"

"Thank you, sir ; no, nothing good enough. I will speedily write something, if you will indulge me by perusing it, when done."

"The sooner you set about it the better, and let us have it as speedily as possible."

When Mr. Faucett, the acting manager, came into the room, he had a startling look, and a scrutinizing eye, as if it tried you for a hidden crime, and wished to read your inmost thoughts through every part of your frame.

"This is Mr. Ball, the author of the many popular pieces, whom I have frequently spoken to you about," said Mr. Kemble.

"Ugh!" and a frown.

"I have expressed a desire that he should write for us."

"Let it be melodrame, then," was the snappish reply, or what I then thought snappish; but this was Faucett's manner, he really possessed a good heart.

"A melodrame of what kind?" I appealed to Mr. Kemble.

"Of what kind?" retorted Faucett. "Look into the papers, incidents enough *invented* there! The other day, a girl carried off by a savage fellow! Rock of Charbonnier."

"Oh!" I replied, "I have written on that subject, and sold it to Mr. Davadge, at the Cobourg."

"Hem! you should have brought it here. Savage fellow, T. P. Cooke! Girl carried off, Mrs. Vining! You're a — fool," I thought he had been about to add, but he ended by, "a quick writer, very quick writer."

"Well, however, bring us your next!" concluded Mr. Kemble.

I took my leave glad, at least, to escape the uncouth abruptness of the acting manager, and eager to fly home and report my bright prospects. It was very true that I had written a melo-drama on the subject of a savage man, as recorded in the *Times* paper, who had carried off a young lady from the house of her family, and concealed her somewhere amongst the rocks of Charbonnier. This piece I had sold to the manager, Mr. Davadge of the Cobourg Theatre, and it was already in rehearsal.

The following morning, during rehearsal at the Cobourg, I happened to tell Davadge

what had transpired between myself, Mr. C. Kemble, and Mr. Faucett, respecting the story of the Charbonnier. Davadge, who was a blunt man, a little in the Faucett school, was nevertheless of a very good disposition, immediately took the M.S. from the prompter, and handing it over to me, observed, "Your fortune is made; this is a *capital* piece, send it to Covent Garden, they will read, and bring it out in a style, so far exceeding anything we could possibly do, that I have not the slightest doubt of its making a most tremendous hit, and you can write for us another drama, on any subject you think proper." This was a very generous action, I forwarded my melodrama to Covent Garden; it was at once read and accepted.

I had an opportunity of returning this obligation, afterwards, to Davadge, by giving him my "Lord of the Isles," (with Rodwell's beautiful music,) by the production of which, Davadge told me himself, he cleared seven hundred pounds, which success

set him so upon his legs, that it led to a train of good fortune, whereby he died worth, at least, thirty thousand pounds.

Mr. Egerton, for whom I had written Joan of Arc, was not only manager at Sadler's Wells, but a leading actor at Covent Garden. He was delighted to hear of my introduction to the boards of *the Theatre Royal*, and came to compliment me accordingly, telling me at the same time, that Mr. George Coleman (the Younger, I think,) had expressed the highest opinion of my "Father and Son ; or, the Rock of Charbonnier," and, in fact, had recommended it to the management, as one of the best written melo-dramas hitherto produced in this country. These are the words as told to me. Fancy this from a man like George Coleman. T. P. Cooke, George Bennet, Cooper, Durruset, Farley, Mrs. Vining, Miss Love, and *the* Mrs. Davenport, did their utmost to sustain the piece ; the scenery by the Grieves was exquisite ; every *practised* opinion in its favour, and

yet it *failed*, and was only acted five nights. So much for the exertion of combined talent ; so much for tried opinion ; so much for the public.

This was my first blow, and I felt it the more keenly, inasmuch as I had buoyed myself so much on the experience of others, that I had not in the least fortified myself for defeat. I sat in a private box ; my poor wife was with me as usual ; the first act went well enough, till it came to the part where Miss Love, as Amy, had to bring on the scarf of Violette, which is supposed to be spotted with blood. This blood-stained scarf seemed a signal for disapproval ; the crowded audience formed two distinct parties, however, for and against ; the interest of the story, which required the most silent attention, was marred in consequence, and the curtain fell to a perfect discord. It will be long ere I forget my sensations on that occasion, of my *first hiss*. It would form the subject of a sentimental ballad ; I felt exactly as if the flooring of the box

had suddenly given way beneath my feet, and was letting me down to an endless abyss. What can surpass the mortification of a condemned author? What can compensate for it? Nothing, in this life.

We got out of the theatre as well and unobserved as we could. I was hastening home along Bow Street, ashamed, blighted, amid a fancied shower of sibilations and hootings, when I heard a voice calling after me, in a *very* friendly tone: I was almost afraid to turn my head; when I did so, however, what could equal my astonishment at seeing the manager, Mr. Charles Kemble, at my elbow. He had enquired the way I had taken, and followed me from the theatre to *console* me. Was not he a manager! and taking me by the hand, conjured me, in the most amiable way, to keep up my spirits, as he felt assured, that another night it would go perfectly well! *Was not he a manager!*

The piece *was* repeated, another night, another, and another, but although it met

with less and less disapprobation, it never went without opposition and after the fifth night, at my own urgent request, it was withdrawn. Mrs. Davenport affirmed, and she was a shrewd woman, that there was a set made against it,—a clique, by persons whose interest it was to oppose any *new* author, especially one whose productions were likely to have a long run; I believe that was the general opinion in the theatre. I had very strong reasons for believing this myself, as I gained experience afterwards; and I am more confirmed in the idea, when I reflect that this same condemned piece has since been acted, with the greatest success, and is still acting, notwithstanding the lapse of years, before the most critical audiences, in almost every theatre in the world, where English is spoken. So much for the risks and vicissitudes of dramatic authors. The papers put another, and perhaps a more reasonable construction, on the unfavourable reception of this *Father and Son*; they attributed its harsh treatment to the distaste

which then so powerfully prevailed against the introduction of decided melo-drama, on the boards of the legitimate drama, and spoke invariably well of it, as a *melo-drama*. After this I was immediately engaged to write the poetry of the *Zauberflöte*, for Covent Garden, which they could not eventually bring out, not being enabled to secure *Harley* for the part of Pappagino!! Hear this ye Italian warblers. I was handsomely paid, nevertheless. Mr. Kemble sent for me to communicate the bad news, as he called it, of their not being able to bring out the *Zauberflöte*. "However," he said, "I must make you some amends; we cannot afford much for this, as it proves a mischance, but will endeavour to recompense you better for something else, and, writing a cheque, he doubled it up and gave it to me: I thanked him and retired. On reaching the street, I looked at my cheque to see where it was payable, I thought it would be five, or perhaps ten, pounds: It was £70! Such was management, in

better, and I must say more honourable times.

Macfarren, also, dramatised the *Zauberflöte*, for the Surrey, and they brought it out with unusual splendour, but it did not succeed. It is a bad story, work it into whatever form you may. I have seen it since performed at the Theatre Royal Drury Lane, *properly* put upon the stage, in the German, with Madame Schrozder Devrient as the Princess Pamina; and also at the same theatre during Mr. Bunn's management, got up accurately, as regards music and superb mounting; but I doubt if it ever paid its expenses. Formerly the literary merits of a libretto were thought of very little consequence, but a happy change has come over the spirit of the dreams of composers, and the first inquiry of a manager is also now whether it be "a *good book*." Our most popular operas are unquestionably excellent books, although Davison declares that Balfe could make an opera out of an

act of parliament. See "Robert the Devil," "Lucia di Lammermoor," "Norma," "The Bohemian Girl," "Somnambula," &c. Apropos of the "Somnambula," I think this not a bad opportunity for telling a little anecdote respecting the first appearance of that somniferous lady in this country. She first walked the plank at the Surrey, in Elliston's time: an author then of no great celebrity, and still less experience, had got hold of the French ballet, and put language to it. Elliston, finding it very dramatic—and Elliston was an excellent judge—resolved to bring it out at his theatre; but finding also a great want of tact displayed, even in the language—for stage language should always be, like its scenery, a little over-coloured—applied to me to give it here and there what he called a *touch up*. I was exceedingly reluctant to do this, inasmuch as it was the work of another author. It was, I considered, indelicate, and dangerous at the same time. "Then, by God, sir," said he, "if you do not un-

dertake it, the piece shall not be produced, and the author, (like most authors, *greatly* in want of means,) won't get his money. If you hang back for terms, sir," and Elliston putting on all his pomposity, "name your price, you shall find the money lying for you on the mantelpiece there, (pointing,) when you bring back the manuscript done."

Still, not relishing the employment, I named a considerable sum for so trifling a task. The manager instantly agreed to give it, and I promised the work next morning by eleven o'clock. I could have done it in half-an-hour; however, at the time appointed, I carried home the M.S. The manager, who was seated, like Cardinal Wolsey, in his chair of state, opened the leaves one after another. His eye brightened at every page; at length, at the scene where the Count goes out at the window, and where I had contrived to pop into his mouth a clap-trap, respecting what the man deserves who would be coward enough to take advantage of unprotected female inno-

cence, Elliston smiled one of his George-the-Fourth smiles, and exclaimed, rubbing his hands, exultingly,—“That will do, sir, that will do; now we *shall* bring them down!” Then, pointing with kingly dignity towards the mantelpiece, I found lying there, according to royal promise, the gold from the exchequer which was to requite me for my labour. Added to this, I had the pleasure of seeing how essentially I had, in the dark, served the author, who was truly deserving of the success which attended his piece. Poor fellow! he is dead now; and no one respects his memory more than myself. He imagined, I presume, that Elliston himself made the alterations.

At night, not the first, I went to see the *Sleeping Beauty*, whether she could *run* as well as *walk*. The author, who was there, came and sat next to me. His piece had been pronounced successful;—he was, in consequence, a little grand, and when it came to my speech of the Count, (the clap-trap,) at the burst of approval with which

a Surrey audience, in particular, invariably greets a *virtuous* exclamation, he turned to me, with a gratified air, and said—"I think I had them there:" little dreaming of the kind treachery of the intention. And sincerely glad was I to be the slight prop to so worthy a fellow—and should have been had I not received a recompense for my, I hope, pardonable duplicity.

I must here relate a second anecdote of Elliston, although, I fancy, it has already been told, doubtless better, by gifted Pierce Egan, the celebrated author of "Life in London." I was one morning proceeding in the direction of the Surrey Theatre, when I met Elliston opposite the Riding School. He had a lofty, but a gracious way of stopping and speaking to you. It was always condescending, but never humiliating; although it was necessary to understand him.

"So, sir," he commenced, "concocting, eh? Something imaginative floating in the air, eh? Why not write for the Surrey

Theatre, eh?" This happened at a time when I had ceased to write for that side of the water, being more fully employed, and better paid, at the other legitimate theatres. "Have you anything would suit us?—*good enough* for us, eh?" As if I had never written there, or as if his own theatre ranked higher than all others, not only in London, but in the world.

"I have a melodrame," I answered, "called 'The Inchcape Bell!'"

"Ah! 'The Inchcape Bell!'—good! Come and read it to me: you *may* to-morrow morning; and, let me see—ah! ten; be punctual." I promised obedience, and I invariably *now* kept my time. It is an admirable custom; I wish it were a little more practised, especially by theatrical people—and *more* especially those who should set the example.

Elliston was again enthroned in his chair of state, but looking unusually dull and drowsy, I thought. However, I commenced—

Act I.—Scene I.

Exterior of an old-fashioned Public House on the sea coast, inscription over the door 'The Inchcape Bell.' An ancient Castle on distant cliff, &c.

Chorus—

Elliston nodded his head ; it was not like a token of assent, or approbation ; however, I continued to read—

Chorus of Seamen.

Over the green and circling wave,
Warning the seaman from his grave,
When rocks sink deep, and billows swell,
Ding dong rings the Inchcape Bell—

Ding ! dong !

Elliston snored, fell almost out of his chair, and rubbed his eyes. I took no notice ; but proceeded, stifling something like an indignant feeling under the sound of my own poetry :—

Oft through the stilly midnight gloom,
Knelling the drowned wretch to his tomb,
Through forked flash, and tempest yell,
Ding dong rings the Inchcape Bell—

Ding ! dong !

Ding dong produced little effect on the ears of the manager ; I do not suppose that the prompter's bell, or even St. Paul's would have woke him up at that moment, he was wrapt in so profound a sleep, and the smell

of laudanum for the first time assailed my olfactory nerves. The fact is, as I afterwards learned, he had had a violent fit of the gout during the night, and was then under the influence of a narcotic.

For some time, not knowing how to proceed, I read on, and then sat silent. At length he began to rouse himself, suddenly struck with an idea, and turning to the end of the M.S., I read as follows—

Gry. Mother! mother! it is accomplished!
You are avenged!

Places dumb boy in Sir John's arms, and sinks exhausted with fatigue. Grand tableau. End. Curtain falls.

I shut the book; Elliston looked vacantly around, as if in quest of his wandering ideas. At length, fixing his eyes on me with a show of understanding what he had not heard—what, in fact, had not been read.

“Good!” exclaimed he, “excellent melodrame for the Cobourg: take it there, sir; they will do it justice.”

I called up my old friend Mrs. Opie's maxim, “*bear and forbear!*” thanked

him, somewhat mortified, I acknowledge, and took my leave.

Scarcely a fortnight from this adventure, Elliston and I met again on the self-same spot, and again he inquired, in almost the self-same terms, whether I had nothing would suit them. "Yes, sir," I replied, "I have a nautical melodrame."

"Nautical, eh?—good. What do you call it? Nautical!—the very thing. What is it, eh?"

"‘The Inchcape Bell,’ sir!" intending to be a little satirical.

"Excellent! the very sort of title to make out our bill. Let me have it to read directly, sir—this very evening." My intended sarcasm was lost. He had utterly, not only forgotten the title of the piece, but every circumstance connected with it. I sent him the M.S., he read it at once, and produced it immediately. It ran eighty nights with the utmost approbation, and drew money; but of that in its place.

Maddox had, also, a great habit of fall-

ing asleep, with a cigar in his mouth, during the reading of an author's piece; but Maddox seems to have the faculty of clairvoyance, namely, *understanding* in his sleep. It is very annoying to the author, nevertheless, although not so intended; but where one is always wide awake, though ever so fast asleep, like my friend Maddox, it makes all the difference, for Maddox has a *kind* heart, I can testify to the fact. On one occasion, when taking a benefit at the Theatre Royal Covent Garden, I was sadly put out for proper singers to execute the music in the "Siege of Rochelle," and happening to mention the circumstance to Maddox, he not only lent me the singers, but absolutely changed the performance at his own theatre, (the Princesses,) in order to accommodate me; and all this without on any one occasion having been under the slightest obligation to me.

After this little wandering from the main road, for the purpose of picking up a few

scattered wild flowers, let us now return to our pilgrimage.

The untoward reception of my "Father and Son" threw a great damp over my spirits. I was like a child, that runs fearlessly till he receives his first tumble, and then is afraid to venture on his feet again. On what opinion was I in future to depend? My own had proved that it could err; and that of Mr. Kemble, Coleman's, and Faucett's, seemed to be no better. I resolved to write no more. My waxen wings had melted: I felt despairingly that the sooner I was crushed upon this earth the better. My wife, with her ever gentle philosophy, always pictured hope; but I fear, especially on this occasion, that my grateful assent to her arguments fell far short of the return which her affection deserved. My pride was hurt. In vain she cited all the *great* authors that had failed in their turn. I refused to be comforted, and refused to write. I had other resources than the

stage: I wrote nearly all the stories in *La Belle Assemblée*—it was at that time a very popular work, and beautifully illustrated. The editor applied to me in vain; I seemed to have lost my imagination. I took it into my head that the managers at the theatres royal treated me coldly, if not scornfully, and I refused to go near them. In short, I ingeniously tormented myself in every possible way, and suffered *truly* all the tortures of a d——d author. Yet it will be found hereafter that out of this mishap came one essential good, as is almost always the case: It brought me acquainted with one of my truest friends, T. P. Cooke, to whose real kindness, frankness, and friendship, I have since been so deeply indebted. But I shall have so much to say of him by and by, that I will not now enlarge either on his talents or his merits.

I had placed my life, and those of others equally dear, upon the hazard of this die, and necessity, a *true friend sometimes*, began, by the most conclusive argument, to con-

vince me that I must now float on in my own stream, let its course flow smoothly or roughly as it might. I am *human* enough, also, to confess, that a new drama which succeeded mine, meeting with a still worse fate, inasmuch as only one act was endured, consoled me—it convinced me that I was not “alone in sorrow;” and a companion in affliction, although not a very charitable relief to attain, still is a relief—added to which, as I knew that the author of the condemned piece had given me a sly lift, “over the left,” in order to promote the facilitation of his own production. I did not feel much sympathy for him, be assured, and at the same time felt there was something like retribution still remaining, and I solemnly attest here, that never, in the whole course of my career, did I express the slightest public disapproval of another author’s work, although I have so frequently seen those do it, (*even towards my own pieces,*) whose principles should have taught them better, especially as they

entered the theatre with orders *written* by *myself*.

I now braced on my armour again, and set out once more with a renovated heart, in the exciting search of new adventures and perils. My melodrama of "Father and Son" succeeded wonderfully well at the Cobourg, for Davage was generous enough still to bring it out, with Le Clerc as Vonfranc, and H. Kemble as the Savage. I wrote a new piece called "Omala; or Settlers in America," and having finished it, at least to my own satisfaction, sent it off to Terry, then manager, in conjunction with Yates, at the Adelphi. This theatre having previously been in the possession of the Rodwells, for whom I had already written and produced in that theatre, the drama of "Waverley." I must give you Terry's reply:—

"MY DEAR SIR,—

"I lose no time in returning you
"the *Caffres*, (so called in the M.S.,) in

“ order that you may, as you say, take
“ Time by the forelock : A mode of treat-
“ ing that venerable personage which
“ should never be omitted.

“ Besides that, your drama calls too
“ largely for our limited capabilities : Scene
“ painter and machinist. We could not,
“ were it entirely fitted to our means, bring
“ it out till an advanced period of the
“ season. Meanwhile, many things more
“ immediately suited to our establishment,
“ might be prepared, while the ‘ Caffres ’
“ was serving your profit at another thea-
“ tre, better calculated to fulfil your scenic
“ demands. Give me leave, however, to
“ assure you, that I think it a very lively,
“ interesting, and actable piece ; a little,
“ perhaps, tending to recal to the recollec-
“ tion of ‘ Inkle and Yarico,’ and the
“ ‘ Africans ’—a point which would be
“ more against it at one of the patent
“ houses, than at a minor. The Governor
“ is a very good part as it stands, and the
“ comic ones all very good. If I might

“advise any alteration, I should advise the
 “simplification of the serious characters,
 “both in the length of their speeches and
 “style of their language. The serious
 “interest in such plays, is always increased
 “by condensation; and the moment the
 “point necessary for the plot is attained,
 “the audience are always impatient for the
 “comic relief. The catastrophe, also,
 “would be better compressed, and brought
 “about with fewer changes and interrup-
 “tions. With such a revision upon these
 “minor points, which *you* can easily give it,
 “I should have little doubt on the stage of
 “what I heartily wish you decided success.

“I remain, dear Sir,

“Very faithfully yours,

“DANIEL TERRY.

“13, Alfred Place,

“8th July, 1825.”

This *well-intended* and *kindly-instructive*
 letter, every word of it true, I had the in-
 gratitude, or the folly, to take in very bad

odour, and called it a pompous knowledge, showing way of evading the acceptance of my piece, and to despise the friendly suggestions as regarded the alterations altogether. The severe lesson I had just received at one of the *patent* theatres had not, as is quite evident, crushed my vanity, (and even vanity is a supporting friend under many difficulties and disappointments ; everything has its good end.) So I sent "Omala" to the Olympic to see what they would say to him. Sam Chapman was there, the Ozzrand of my Inkeeper. They accepted the piece, and Sam played Omala, as no other person, I think, could have played it. It was a masterpiece of *savage* life, and sentiment. Poor Sam ! he was a nervous, sensible little fellow. I heard that he died, somewhere in America, in 1830, in consequence of a fracture in his arm, which terminated in a mortification. Peace to his ashes. A bolder, a less deceptive heart, does not beat. I have never seen an actor like him, nor one that could have supplied his place.

Loveday played the Governor excellently well. He was a droll satirist, for I remember saying on the stage, at rehearsal, that modern authors were seldom *quoted*; to which Loveday, looking at me, replied cleverly and tartly—"That was because authors now-a-days knew d——d well how to *coat* themselves." The scenery of "Omala," without any gilding, was as beautiful as the most beautiful I have since seen on the stage—and that is saying much for it—painted by Tomkins, and the piece itself as successful as any author could have wished. It ran nearly the season. And now for the *good* which grew out of the bad luck at Covent Garden. The pieces on which they depended at the Adelphi failed, notwithstanding all the judgment of the manager, (Mr. Terry,) and we have seen that he *had* judgment, and knew well how to advise *others*.

They always make a mighty error in judgment, who imagine that a *great company* can sustain any theatre without *good*

pieces ; and Terry and Yates depended on their *company*, which was indeed a phalanx of talent. Terry, Yates, Wrench, T. P. Cooke, John Reeve, Mrs. Yates, Mrs. Fitzwilliam, and all these people in their prime. Still *they* made a failure, and played to empty benches, while the "Omala," my rejected, was filling the Olympic to overflowing. There is no calculating upon these things. The public are so vacillating.

"What shall we do for a new drama that will *bring money*?" inquired Terry, one day, querulously, in the treasury.

"There's a Mr. Ball," replied T. P. Cooke, who was receiving his salary, "he seems to hit them hard."

"Ball," reiterated Terry, "Ball, Ball? He sent me a Caffre story the other day, which I've returned. How can I now send and request him to write for us. Of course he'd sneer at us!"

"Leave it to me," answered Cooke. "You don't *know* him, I see; I'll call on him, and if he *can* hit upon anything to set

us afloat, he's the fellow that will be delighted to do it."

Cooke, therefore, came driving up to my house, with his smart chaise, and his white horse. I was at home, suffering with the tooth-ache, to which I was always a martyr, especially while I lived in Stamford Street. Cooke was a most excellent tactician, and began flattering me up with points in "Father and Son," which he said had been unappreciated, and so forth, and then recommended me to try the Adelphi.

"But the manager despises me, and has sent back my piece." The tooth left off aching.

"The manager does *not* despise you, my dear boy: Your piece was too difficult for us, the stage is small, (it was so then). Write something else; what say you to a nautical piece, by the author of the "Floating Beacon," eh? A piece, by the way, of which I have yet to speak."

"A nautical piece?"

"Yes; and I'll play the sailor."

That was no recommendation to *me*, as I had never seen Cooke play a sailor ; and I thought it impossible to eclipse Gallot as Jack Junk in the aforesaid " Floating Beacon."

" You the sailor ! Well, but where are we to find a nautical subject ?"

" Cooper's Pilot."

" The Pilot ! I've read, and don't understand it ; don't like it," said I, fretfully.

" Read it again, my boy, you'll understand it then, especially if you make out a sort of yarn, as you go along. They'll pay well, I can tell you, and the sooner you pipe all hands for action, the better."

I promised ; Cooke took his leave, while I set out for the circulating library, to bring home a copy of the Pilot, which I had altogether refused to dramatise at the Surrey, and foresaw nothing but failure in the attempt elsewhere.

CHAPTER VI.

It appears that I have somehow over-shot twenty-four, a year prolific in my productions and the changes of management. Burroughs had quitted the Surrey; and the Johnstones had taken it, with a Mr. Delaforce; I became, for the first time, an engaged author there, at a regular salary. My tragedy of *Antigone* had been got up with great splendour, and played many nights, but was too classic a subject for the Surreyites, as might have been anticipated by the most unsophisticated. Then there was the *Barber*; or, the *Mill of Bagdad*, *The Three Hunchbacks*; *Peveril of the Peak*; and the *Burning Bridge*. Of this *Burning Bridge*, I have one or two anecdotes

to record. The opening scene was an orange grove, in which Mrs. Young, and little Miss Young (afterwards the celebrated Mrs. Honey,) were discovered, the latter on a ladder, throwing the oranges, which she was gathering from a tree, into her mother's lap. Nothing could have surpassed the beauty of this scene, by Tomkins ; he was then in all his popularity, to which the elegant and picturesque costumes of the performers, gave a delightful reality. After a little interval, for a duet, between the ladies, "Take, oh take this golden fruit," Henry Kemble had to rush into the orange grove, as a sorcerer, or a tyrant ; in doing so, his long costly robes, becoming entangled with a set piece, pulled down with it, the orange tree excepted, every morsel of scenery on the stage, discovering only bare walls and flaring lamps. Imagine the consternation of the manager ; imagine the consternation of the *actor* ; imagine the consternation of the *author* ; but that's impossible ; no, it would be too much. It

could only be surpassed by that of the scene painter, who proceeded to tear the unfortunate hair from his head, while Mr. Aulde, then acting manager, rushed forward to address the almost convulsed audience, which he did in the following unmistakable speech.

“ Ladies and Gentlemen, the scenery has fallen down! (*roars of laughter,*) Ladies and Gentlemen, honoured by your approval, if you will allow us to *draw up*—I mean *let down* the curtain, this piece shall begin over again, *from the beginning.* (*loud applause ; curtain falls*). The scene was reset ; in a few minutes the curtain rose again, and all went so smoothly to the end, the audience in so excellent a humour, that I have frequently questioned myself since, whether it would not answer the purpose, on the first night of a new doubtful piece, previously to the conclusion of the first act, to push all the scenery into the pit, by way of exciting the *tender* sympathies of the *generous* public.

There was, also, another curious accident happened, during the long run of this *Burning Bridge*, but, I regret to add, of a much more distressing nature. At the conclusion of the drama, a female spectre had to rise from a lake, surrounded by mist, which effect was produced by lamps, placed behind gauzes, surrounding the figure. When this cloud of gauzes had almost reached the ceiling, a breath of air blew one of the folds across the lamp, and the spectre's dress was instantly in flames. Poor Leslie! for it was a *gentleman* who played the *lady*, immediately made an effort to dispossess himself of his unearthly garments, and in so doing, discovered to the *amazed* audience, that he, *she* was a *Scotchman*, with his kilt on, ready dressed for the afterpiece, *Waverly*. The effect was too ludicrous, notwithstanding the peril of the circumstance, for the audience to repress their uproarious mirth, which was very soon changed into compassion by Leslie, who was terribly frightened, jumping out

of the machinery, an immense height from the stage, by which means he was, I am sorry to add, seriously injured, and never entirely recovered.

Another accident of a curious nature happened in this theatre, on the 102nd night of a spectacle called *The Fire-worshippers*. Gallot, who had to ride across the stage on a camel, decorated with gorgeous trappings, had scarcely proceeded three yards from the side scene, when the large trap gave way under the immense weight of the gigantic animal, and in an instant the poor helpless creature lay crushed, with its neck broken, in an immense box ; it was impossible to extricate him, except limb by limb, which, as he expired in the course of the evening, was the eventual result. For Gallot, he saved himself by his presence of mind, throwing himself off the camel's back, to a considerable distance, with the greatest dexterity. Notwithstanding this interruption, and the confusion it excited, the spectacle was very well received, although

it went somewhat tamely. The afterpiece to follow, was a nautical melo-drama, called *The Floating Beacon*, in which Mrs. W. Clifford, and Henry Kemble were to make their appearance; Gallot, also, had to sustain a most prominent part; and all this over the body of the poor dead camel. Both spectacle and the nautical piece were mine, I leave the reader to guess the state of my feelings; the audience and the actors all out of tune. Coming events cast their shadows before them; although, alas, the shadow does not always point out the actual damage of the storm.

The curtain again rose, the scenery, by Tomkins, was beautiful, the characters so simple and natural, that it seemed as if a sudden ray of light had come over the darkness of the waters, and that a most happy voyage might be anticipated. The second scene presented a still brighter prospect: a section of *The Floating Beacon*, the surrounding waves, the moving horizon, done to such a perfect reality, all painted

on gauze, that you might well have believed yourself absolutely on board. The appearance of Mrs. W. Clifford, as the Maniac of the Wreck, in her picturesque costume, with her magnificent figure, and large black eyes, gave a perfect finish to the whole ; so perfect, that the dome of the theatre rang with general and enthusiastic applause. Gallot's acting, too, as Jack Junk, appeared a sort of inspiration ; his very hat, with the *picter* of his ship upon it, seemed to act, and all was proceeding thus smoothly—even the departed camel was forgot—when it was discovered that one of the principal actors could not, from a *spiritual* cause, by any means remember a word of his part, and yet, was sufficiently obstinate—not unfrequent in such attacks—to persevere in trying to perform his *best*. This, of course, like an inexperienced dancer in a quadrille, threw everybody else out. The hisses began, rage ensued. At length the curtain fell amid shouts of scorn and disapprobation.

What a change for me, in the very theatre wherein I had hitherto been so caressed. So much so, indeed, that, on entering a box, I had frequently been received by the public, like some favourite actor, and that at a time when it was not the fashion to call for the author; was not this a *viscissitude*?

No Mr. Charles Kemble followed me on this occasion with kind consoling words, as I returned home. My poor wife's voice only attempted gently to comfort me, but even her voice failed. A sleepless night, a wretched, restless day, ensued; the hour of performance returned. *The Fire-worshippers* and *The Floating Beacon*, were to be repeated. It might be thought that I, at least, should have remained away; on the contrary, my heart was ever in the battle, and there, ever, was I. To have remained away would have been ~~the~~ *suffering*; I, therefore, braced up my nerves to endure the worst, be it whatever it might, and

supporting myself against the back of a box, for I stood the whole evening, I once more witnessed that performance, from beginning to end.

The house was crowded; *The Fire-worshippers* went off smoothly, I did not care much about the spectacle; I detested, and always shall, pieces of gingerbread; I never wrote them, except per order. For this little nautical drama, I had an affection; it had been almost brought out against the inclination of the management. No one appeared to think highly of it, except Mrs. Clifford, Gallot, and myself; and its bad reception, on the first night, was attributed, of course, by the manager, who prided himself on his great foresight, more to its own want of merit, than the delinquency of *one* of the actors. But such were the circumstances dramatic authors had then to encounter; and too many of a similar nature are still to be encountered, I apprehend, even by the enlightened writers of the more modern drama.

The delinquent, however, of the preceding night, *had* now studied his part, got more *sober* and less *mellow* in it, and was quite capable of suiting the word to the action. The result was, that this melodrama, with which the public, the night previously, had left the theatre in disgust, made so tremendous a sensation, that it ran the actual number of one hundred and twenty consecutive nights ; nor was this all ; it was played on the same nights, by nearly the same company, at Sadlers Wells, 120 times more ; making, altogether, 240 consecutive nights. I am especially particular in recording this last event, because it tends so practically to prove and illustrate, how very deeply an *author* may be injured by the disaffection of a single actor, and how immediately he is at the mercy of a simple, untoward circumstance. I absolutely saw an excellent piece fail, at Drury Lane Theatre, merely because a corporal, on account of the heat of the

weather, could not contrive to make his false moustachios stick on. It is now more than twenty years since the production of the *Floating Beacon*, but I think I can speak with perfect truth in stating, that there has scarcely been one week since, in which it has not been represented in some theatre, either in London, the country, or America.

I spoke, a few pages back, of my drama of "Waverley," it was my first attempt at the Adelphi, and comes charged with happy memories, or I should not have recurred to it. It was then I came to make my first acquaintance with George Herbert Rodwell, the composer and *melodist*; his brother Thomas being manager of the theatre (a very clever man, and a good author,) Rodwell's music to *Waverley*, was amongst the first of his many happy productions, and the snatches of songs so exquisitely sung for him, by that lovely syren, Mrs. Waylett, (and how is it we

have no longer such exquisite warblers,) in the character of Davie Galettley, elicited universal approval. John Reeve, too, first played for me as Mrs. Nosebag, and when I think of the truthful, and humourous matter-of-fact existence which he embodied in that character, the same feeling of a sad conviction comes over me, that I have, as regards the recollection of the dulcet beauty of Mrs. Waylett's natural voice, that every superior natural talent has been long fading away. Mrs. Waylett's *was* a voice, a *woman's* voice; such as *men*, with manly feelings, love to hear; and had in it none of those deep notes, now so *dear* to Englishmen, which make one almost doubt the *sex* of the singer. For my own part, with some exceptions, I confess that I think those heavy voices, in females, positively *distressing*; everything masculine in a woman, is to *me*, *almost* as disgusting, as effeminacy in a man. As regards both Mrs. Waylett, and John Reeve, it is not so

many years since they were both before the public, and I appeal to any person, who has heard the one, or seen the other, whether my opinion of their talent be in the least exaggerated; because I know that it is the custom of the time we live in, for people of a certain age, to imagine, that we of another certain age, judge by gone-by opinions and feelings. To counteract this, it is to be greatly regretted that your actors cannot leave behind them such astounding convictions, as those of the old masters, in painting—Titian, Claude, Rembrandt, &c., I am simply speaking of ballad singing, likely, very soon, to be exploded, unless indeed, some new and bewitching Bland or Waylett, spring up, with a voice capable of fascinating English ears, by simple and pure melody, instead of what very few understand, however much they affect it, that is to say, the grand scena, the bravura, and the brillante. Everybody has heard the old anecdote of the

lady, who explained to Dr. Johnson, the difficulties of the scena she had been executing, and the doctor's celebrated *blunder*, "I wish to goodness, madam, such difficulties were *impossible*." However, at all events, I do not coincide with the great pedant, in this opinion; I admire scientific difficulties, in grand operas—*Le Prophète*, or *Les Huguenots*—beautifully executed, by such professors as Viardot, Grisi, Garcia, Bosio, Mario, &c., but it disgusts me to hear people affect and disdain, because we have fine foreign flowers in our hot houses, native daisies on the village green, or the sweet violet in the hedge. It is a vulgar error, nevertheless most promptly have I lent all my genius, such as it was, to aid the cause of music. The choruses in the "Barber of Seville," and "Figaro," were first written by me, under Sir Henry Bishop. In such a state were operas, previously to that time, that I have seen Jones (a great actor,) play the

part of Count Almaviva, as a speaking character, and when it came to the singing part, another individual step forward and vocalise, in fact the count had apparently a singing *double*. Very few really know how much music is indebted for its progress in this country to Bishop, or half the obstacles he had to contend with. His enthusiasm in his profession was boundless, but his indolence was almost a complete counteraction. I wrote for him, entirely under his own direction, an opera on the subject of the "Pilgrimage to Canterbury," he liked it *exceedingly*, and at a time when money was almost vital to him, a publisher, through me, offered to pay him £300, when he had completed the first act. He never composed a single note.

I ought, perhaps, to apologise to my indulgent readers, for this little digression in favour of ballads and ballad singing, which I am always ready to champion,

looking upon their sweet combination, as a sort of national art. It may be a weakness, and an ignorant one, as no doubt it is, but, though I admire the costly Italian villa, with its jasper columns and gilded domes on the hill, I see no cause for pulling down the little woodbine-covered cottage in the vale. And now to proceed. After a good deal of buccaneering at the minors, which might not prove interesting to the general reader, I shall leap at once to the production of the *Pilot* at the Adelphi, which, thanks to the exertions of my friend T. P. Cooke, found its way thither, and before the public without any great exertions on my part.

I have already said, in a former page, although it might have been better said here, in the first instance, that I did not, as Mr. Bunn calls it, "tackle" greatly to the subject. At Cooke's suggestion, however, I again procured the novel, which my dear wife, with her anxious assiduity, read

to me, commending every particle, as she read, to encourage and inspire me. I made the sketch as we proceeded, and wrote the various songs, (ballads,) also, "*When the sails are furled*," in particular, and in the course of a very short time had completed rather a bold programme of my three acts. Having done this, I put the M.S. in my pocket, and posted off to Cooke's, in Torrington Square, where he then resided, to hear what *his* opinion was of my progress. Cooke was ill in bed with the gout: this was a damper, for a hornpipe affair especially. Mrs. Cooke, however, (with the kindness she always displayed,) from the top of the stairs, requested me to walk up, and I perceived to my great consternation, that the dirt on the soles of my boots, for I was somewhat abstracted, had left a visible impression on every step of the white holland which covered the stair carpet. I saw also that she was annoyed; she saw that I was very sorry. A smile of forgive-

ness set all right. I was in the sick man's chamber. Cooke had a violent fit of the gout, to which he was unfortunately but too subject. He welcomed me, and sat up nevertheless to hear me read the piece; but, as there was not the slightest apprehension of *his* falling asleep, like Elliston, he became quite interested, as was also Mrs. Cooke, who did me the favour to be a listener. Of all things, I love a female audience; and *if* a shade had come over her countenance as regarded her snowy stair-cloth, she made me ample amends by praising my *poetry*—the first song and duet especially. The following lines they made me repeat over and over again. Was not I proud?—and am I not even now a *leetle* vain of the recollection?

“ While the level deck his feet pace,

“ ‘Mid the silvery clouds on high,

“ He views his Lucy's sweet face,

“ Like an angel's beaming from the sky.”

The greatest commendation followed the

conclusion of this perusal, and as Cooke requested me to leave the M.S. for the purpose of making his own remarks in private, I did so, with the utmost confidence and pleasure, and went home with my good news, which, on all occasions, was only *half* a happiness to me, till I had communicated and shared it with my devoted *better half*.

My "Omala" was now doing wonders at the Olympic; several days passed rapidly away. I received no answer from Cooke, and on returning the following Monday from the last-mentioned theatre, judge of my consternation at seeing at the lower extremity of the Adelphi play bill, the following startling announcement—

"*In rehearsal, and shortly will be produced,
" a new original Nautical Burletta, founded on
" Cooper's popular novel of the Pilot," &c., &c.*

It was quite *natural* to me to torment myself, and as I thought it very unlikely a manager would underline a piece, without previously conferring with the author, I

immediately came to the *satisfactory* conclusion that this was the production of some more *favoured* dramatist, and that I had been *excessively ill-treated*. My oracle at home, unlike most women in that respect, generally looked on the sunny side of the question, which, I am afraid to recollect, I answered peevishly, was for the sake of contradiction. However, *she* was right. While we were arguing the point, Cooke himself arrived with *the* chaise, and celebrated white horse, to conduct me to the theatre. The piece was to be read that very morning : the *sketch* ! for it was never altered ; and Cooke told me afterwards that he kept it back for fear I *should* alter it, as he felt that it could not be better done.

I found Terry, upon acquaintance, a very gentlemanly, intelligent man ; and Yates also. They gave me good terms ; and the burletta was thus admirably cast—

Pilot . . . Mr. Terry.

Barnstable . . Mr. Yates.

<i>Boroughcliffe</i>	.	.	Mr. John Reeve.
<i>Long Tom Coffin</i>	.	.	Mr. T. P. Cooke.
<i>Serjeant Drill.</i>	.	.	Mr. Sanders.
<i>Kate Plowden</i>	.	.	Mrs. Fitzwilliam.
<i>Cecelia</i>	.	.	Miss Boaden.
<i>Irishwoman</i>	.	.	Mrs. Daly.

Nothing could have been better. The drama was as quickly produced as it had been written and underlined, and everyone knows with what triumphant success.

I shall give an extract here from Cumberland's beautiful edition of the work, which speaks better for me, than, with the modesty pertaining to authorship, I could possibly speak for myself. Besides, I owe so much to Cooper, which I respectfully acknowledge.

"Long Tom Coffin is drawn with great energy. In the scene where he swoons and describes the storm, we are for a moment impressed with its reality: we hear the roaring of the tempest, the creaking of the mast, the cries of the mariners.

“ The whole scene is wrought up by mechanical skill. The lightning flashes in our eyes—the water booms in our ears. The acting was excellent: Mr. Yates played with judgment, Mr. Terry with feeling. But the crack performers were the Captain Boroughcliffe of John Reeve, and the Long Tom Coffin of T. P. Cooke. There is a quaintness of manner about Reeve—a queer gait, a dröll wink, a rich chuckle, that well qualify him for characters of fun. Mr. Cooke gave a new feature to the sailor’s character: it was that of thoughtfulness and mystery—of deep-toned passion and romance. Tom on the high and giddy mast, had beheld the ocean with a meditating eye; he adored it as his element, and reposed upon its billows. Mr. Cooke embodied the utmost conception of the author; and more, his appearance was highly picturesque. Although the popularity of a piece is not the surest criterion of its merits, the present one is an exception. It was played

"upwards of two hundred nights, and
"might have been played two hundred
"more ere it had been superseded by any-
"thing better."

Coleman, though in his own dramatic writings he had been highly lavish of his oaths, invariably in fulfilling his duty as Licensor cut them out of the works of others. When the "Pilot" had become very popular, Coleman went to witness its representation. Cooke, who never failed of making an excellent point of "No, if I do I'm d——d," on coming to the proscribed line in question, and suddenly perceiving the Licensor in the boxes, proceeded, "No, if I do I'm——" and placing his thumb with great ludicrous quaintness on his nose, stopped short, with a look so comic, that the immortal George laughed heartily himself, at a manœuvre, which told better than words, how, on other occasions, the critic's professional morality had been attended to. The papers, the *Times* in particular, spoke in unqualified praise of the drama.

It was asserted, and I have no doubt of its truth, that the managers cleared upwards of seven thousand pounds by the production of the "Pilot;" and I must allow that much of this was due to their own exertions and talents. Terry's Pilot was a masterpiece of acting. His delivery of the following speech, was, perhaps, the finest and most impressive effect ever produced by plain speaking in a melo-drame --

Pilot. Hardly could the scared wretch, who, thus, secured your boy, and clung with his other arm to the flurrying raft for support, turned his almost bewildered gaze towards the struggling object he was compelled to abandon, ere that frail form had sunk to rise no more. A moment—a moment only—in the awful pause of the tempest—*one fair hand, whiter than the lashing waters around it, was lifted—thus—in silent agony above the flood, as if to speak a dying mother's gratitude—and then—then, it was all oblivion—dark despair.* *Act III, Scene 5.*

Saunders, also, made quite an effect in the little part of Serjeant Drill. His droll nasal "Oh Y—e—s," in reply to Boroughcliff's commands, fairly shook the house with laughter.

On the hundredth night of the "Pilot," the managers gave a great dinner on the stage to 100 persons. Would it be believed, I was not one of the invited. Little as I ever cared, or care, about those sort of things, I confess my feelings were hurt; but my wife, my great counsellor always for the best, assured me that the "oversight," as she called it—I, "insulting neglect"—was too ridiculous not to be a forgetfulness, and begged of me to go. I did so with a very ill grace, and found a place reserved for me, and a cordial reception, with numerous apologies for what really *was* an oversight.

Of course, in dramatising this novel, I was compelled to take great liberties with the original. In a work of such a nature, magnificently abounding with *so many* mental beauties, it is difficult to make up your *heart* to dismiss one of them, in justice to the original author; yet we are compelled so to do, one after the other, in order to meet the time and circumstances of the drama, and also to dovetail the chasms with

fittings of our own manufacture. This is not so easy as those imagine who write such severe theatrical critiques on us poor dramatists. It is no easy task to adapt a novel for the stage, as those flighty reviewers will find, if they once set about trying the experiment. Independently of this, I was compelled to turn the tide a little, and change the plot in favour of our own nation: I was afraid, else, of giving a national offence to the *less enlightened* portion of the audience. I do not suppose either way, that the license *would have been refused*. But reflections on these points had made me, in the first instance, decline dramatising the work. I was fearful of meeting any popular prejudice, by which the piece might have been upset; and I hope the expedient I hit upon, which was nothing more than allowable to dramatic tact, gave no offence to any American feeling, for I assure them on the other side of the water that I never entertained for them the slightest *feeling* save that of a *brother*. And, after all, I

hear that they have done themselves ample justice by turning the tables on me again, and I congratulate them on *their* dramatic tact accordingly. The piece has been equally successful in America.

I fancy it was somewhere about this time that I went to pass the summer with my wife and our little girl, Louisa, at Hastings. I had written, or was writing a work called *The Songs of the Birds*, with Rodwell, the composer, who was of our party, and a happy, merry party it proved, for Rodwell, ever a most joyous companion, was then "a gay young fellow, full of mirth, and full of glee." At Hastings, we encountered Stanfield, the celebrated painter, then scene painter at the Theatre Royal, Drury Lane.

It was with Stanfield I first ventured on the briny ocean, of which I had written so much, thanks to the hints supplied me by others. I shall never forget the novelty and delight of my sensations, as the bark bounded over the brisk billows. I had

speedily made up my mind to take at least a voyage round the world, so buoyant was my heart with air-like spirits; when suddenly a dark cloud apparently rushed over them, and my heart fell at least fifty degrees: a horrible nausea took possession of me; Stanfield appeared mightily to enjoy this reverse of courage, although, for my part, I saw, at least felt, nothing in it to laugh at; and by the time we reached land, scarcely a couple of miles, it seemed to me *sixty*, I was almost in a state of prostration, so upset and ill indeed, that I was compelled to go home and retire to bed. I shall never forget my first sea trip with Stanfield, off Hastings. What a frightful malady is this sea sickness, and how incomprehensible. I know of no suffering equal to it; yet, almost everyone makes it a subject of ridicule. In crossing the Atlantic many die of it; and poor young Macfarren, the talented painter, had the dreadful misfortune to lose his sight in consequence of violent attacks of sea sickness,

on his voyage to America. On the other hand, they tell us, in consumptive cases, it has frequently proved most beneficial ; and it is a blessing that most constitutions, I believe, find it so beneficial, though, for my own part, I should almost prefer death to a very long sea sickness.

I wrote, at Hastings, my drama of the " Inchcape Bell," which was produced by Mr. Elliston, as I have already related, and it was here that Stanfield suggested to me the story of " The Devil's Elixir," for Drury Lane. He promised to paint the scenery himself ; and his scenery was, indeed, something worth writing for.

What a beautiful romantic place is Hastings !—with its Dripping Well, its Lover's Seat, its solitary coves, and cliffs, and shady, hazel coppiced meadows. There is scarcely a turn which is not poetry ; at every step we pause either to look up or down at some new beauty. Then there are so many antiquities, which wake up a pleasing his-

torical feeling to the mind: the landing of the Norman conqueror, the old table rock, on which it is said he dined with his barons; the ruins of the chapel on the high cliff, and the open tombs of departed greatness, whose last resting places have outlived their ashes. All these things are curious subjects for speculation and reflection; while to those whose minds are not prone to worldly uncertainties, and like not to dwell on serious or sad thoughts, Hastings still offers full compensation in its lively society, its joyous places of resort, its health-breathing air, and its luxuriant bathing. I heard Miss Love one morning trying the effect of her voice amongst the rocks at Hastings!

My next attempt at the Adelphi, was in a piece of diablerie called "The Flying Dutchman," which many people preferred to the Pilot. These sort of dramas were then very much the vogue, and "The Flying Dutchman" was not by any means

behind even *Frankenstein*, or *Der Freschütz* itself in horrors and blue fire. The subject was a very fresh one, though it had so much of salt water in its composition.

T. P. Cooke was the Dutchman, which I don't believe he ever greatly fancied ; however, he played it, as he looked it, to perfection.

Terry was *Peppercoal* ; Yates, *Barnstable* ; John Reeve, *Von Bummel* ; Wrench, *Toby Varnish* ; Lestelle, *Miss Boden* ; and Lucy, *Mrs. H. Hughes* ; Paulo, the *Black*. This drama caused a great sensation with the public, especially with the more romantic portion, and was played nearly the whole season, although its success suffered comparatively by that of the *Pilot* ; the managers—most inconsistently—were in the habit of depreciating its success by the extraordinary popularity of its predecessor : though right glad would they have been afterwards to have met with a drama popular as “*The Flying Dutchman*.” The long run of my pieces became

injurious to me with managers in the end, as every one expected a drama of mine *must* go at least a hundred nights, and if it only reached forty or fifty, they looked upon it as a dreadful failure, and would ask me how it happened that I did not write them so good a piece as the Pilot, as if to insure a long run existed within myself; whereas a man might as well attempt to command the weather, as to command the success, or *run*, of any dramatic work whatever.

During the rehearsals of "The Flying Dutchman," Cooke walked through his part like a person who submits, with noble resolution, to a martyrdom. On the first night's representation, the tremendous applause he met with, being in that part a great actor, in spite of himself, convinced him thoroughly that he had made a slight mistake. Accordingly, the next morning at rehearsal, with a very good and right-minded feeling, in which he was never deficient, he deputed his wife, a most excellent

lady, who, though not a theatrical, happened to be present, to offer me some acknowledgement for the coolness he had displayed: with a sweet smile she took up the prompter's pen, a plumed pen, and advancing towards me with it in her hand, like a palm branch, said she had come with a flag of truce from Cooke, that he thought, from Vanderdecken being a silent part, it would prove ineffective. My reply was—"When the refractory child smiles, the father not only forgives, but forgets everything." I need not add that Cooke's hand and mine were quickly linked together, and a firmer friend I do not possess. His acting of Vanderdecken had in it a sublimity of awful mystery, which those who have seen him in the part can alone comprehend.

My "Devil's Elixir" had been written and presented to Mr. Price, (then manager at Drury Lane): for I must here remark that the Covent Garden people, notwithstanding all my successes at the minors, had shown themselves somewhat ungraciously,

towards me, ever since the failure of my "Father and Son." Price gave me no sort of reply about the Elixir, neither did he purpose to swallow the dose, although it had been presented and recommended by the hand of the immortal Stanfield himself. I wrote a note of inquiry; I received no answer. At length, one day, when I applied personally, a painful ordeal. I was told by a messenger of the manager at the hall door of the theatre that if I wanted my M.S. I might take it and devote it to whatever purpose I pleased. Indignant at such an affront, I, of course, requested back the manuscript, which the man procured, and I carried it out of the theatre in no very pleasing frame of mind. Not long after this event I received an invitation to dine with George Rodwell, to meet Peake on business, the popular author of the "Hundred Pound Note," &c., &c. This business turned out to be that Peake had dramatised the story of "The Bottle Imp," which was but another version of the

"Devil's Elixir," and was about to produce it under Mr. Arnold's management at the English Opera, and as Peake professed himself no poet, I was in request to write the songs and concerted pieces, which Rodwell undertook to compose. Good night, then, said I internally, to the "Devil's Elixir;" and with good heart prepared to enlist all my best energies in the service of "The Bottle Imp."

Rodwell had been so successful with my words of "When the Sails are Furled," and "Return, oh! my Love," in the "Flying Dutchman," that he was very anxious I should write the songs in Mr. Peake's new burletta. I did my best, and we were equally successful in the songs "*Ye Bright and Glittering Palaces!*" and "*They Mourn Me Dead in my Father's Halls,*"—the latter, to a charming melody, was delightfully sung by Wood, and twice encored the first night, rendered infinite service to Peake in a most equivocal state of the performance. Such was the favour shown to

this little operetta, that, eventually, it absolutely found its way to the boards of the Theatre Royal Covent Garden, where it was equally well received. And now I come to record another circumstance, whereby the very obstacle supposed to be thrown in the way of the production of a drama, is the actual cause of its being produced, at the very theatre, too, in which it might have been considered most likely to shut it out.

The approbation bestowed upon "The Bottle Imp," induced Mr. Kemble to regret that it had not been originally one of their own productions, rather than that of the English Opera. I told him then the circumstance of my having written a similar story—"The Devil's Elixir"—which the similarity of Mr. Peake's operetta would, of course, prevent my offering to any theatre. Mr. Kemble did not perceive the similarity. He had read the story in German, and would like to see what I had done with it.

Of course it was soon in his possession, and I was appointed to call the following

Wednesday for an answer. I called on the Wednesday. Mr. Kemble had forgotten all about the Elixir, or what had become of it; at length he recollected that he had given it to Faucett to read, and desired me to go across the stage and knock at Faucett's room door, and make inquiries whether he had read "The Devil's Elixir."

To knock at Faucett's door at any time was anything but agreeable: especially if it should happen at a period when he had been in the slightest degree annoyed by one of the thousand and one vexations which perpetually buzz about a manager like a swarm of gnats by the side of a river in summer time. I plucked up resolution, however. Somebody cried snarlingly "Come in!" I opened the door, there I found Faucett and Mr. Morton, author of "Speed the Plough," the most liberal of all dramatic readers.

Faucett absolutely smiled, and said blandly—"If you have come about your little opera, Mr. Morton likes it, so do I;

it does you credit ; it's better written than the generality of such ——" he meant *trash*, but said *things*.

Mr. Morton paid me many kind and gentlemanly compliments, not only on the present drama, but on many of my productions which he had heard of, I should say not witnessed. And he was as sincere in his opinions as in his good intentions, being a man perfectly devoid of any jealous feelings, and a true friend ever ready to extend his hand to rising genius wherever he met with it, or wherever it might need his *assistance*. "Your 'Devil's Elixir' will be put in hand *directly* !" observed he, with a smile, intending, I could perceive, to delight me.

"Directly!" responded Faucett. "Strange second title, though ; strange second title— '*Shadowless Man* !'" And he left the room to proceed to the copyist, reiterating between a laugh of approval and derision— "*Shadowless Man*."

Lest I should become tiresome to the

general reader, I will not dwell upon the rehearsals which followed of *The Devil's Elixir; or, the Shadowless Man*. And how agreeable and intellectual all rehearsals invariably were at Covent Garden in those days; especially to an author single-minded and inclined to believe every complimentary expression sincere. Four years had elapsed since the first of my failures at this theatre; and during all that time I had not been enabled, by any sort of intercession, interest, or talent, to recover my caste on its boards. I had often felt this deeply, and the production of the "Bottle Imp," and the brutal sort of rejection of operetta at Drury Lane, inspired me with any emotion rather than a presentiment of good fortune. I was almost afraid to try the experiment, remembering how they lauded and praised "Father and Son," even the very licenser, who spoke of its merits at a public dinner so Mrs. Gibbs, assured me. I became *frightened* at a

single word said in favour of the Elixir, and shut my ears from the slightest breath of praise as from an evil omen.

The night came—April 20th, 1829. The bill was an extraordinary one; and the house, at half-price, crowded. *The Point of Honour* commenced the evening, in which Charles Kemble played: then came *Honest Thieves*, in which glorious John Reeve, lately transplanted from the Adelphi to Covent Garden, sustained, I thought, or felt, to a most fatiguing length, the part of Obadiah. Then up went the curtain to the *Devil's Elixir*. The cast was admirable: Mr. Warde, Diddear, Mr. Wood, (the splendid tenor,) O. Smith, Keeley, Miss Goward, (afterwards Mrs. Keeley,) and Miss Hughes, the *prima donna* of the theatre. The music by Rodwell. The scenery by the Grieves and Finley. In a word, nothing could be better put upon the stage, under the direction of that great artist, Farley, or better acted, or better sung, and

the "Devil's Elixir" was perfectly successful at the Theatre Royal Covent Garden.* I see a critique, from the *Times*, I believe, which, after speaking some length in approval, concludes by saying—"The piece was exceedingly well received, and will probably have, as it fully deserves, a considerable run."

After these circumstances, I think no author ought to despond at a rejection. I should have thrown this operetta on the back of the fire when I took it from Drury Lane, but for a kind remonstrance from my wife. Yet it eventually brought me two hundred pounds, and established me as a successful writer at Covent Garden Theatre! Such are our chances—such our vicissitudes. I perceive by the bill, June 22nd, 1829,

* From the *Times*, 1829. *Covent Garden Theatre*.—The new piece at this theatre is called the *Devil's Elixir*; or, the *Shadowless Man*. The main plot is taken from Hoffman's extraordinary romance, which bears the first title, and some use has been made of *Peter Schlemile* to supply that part which relates to the *Shadowless Man*. The author has managed his materials most ingeniously, and has given his drama a very original character.

that the "Devil's Elixir" was still running : in fact, it continued its uninterrupted course till the end of the season, when it had the honour of a bespeak from H.R.H. the Duchess of Clarence, afterwards the never-to-be-sufficiently-lamented—the *universally beloved* Queen Adelaide.

They agreed to give me £20 per week for this piece, and the first week paid me : the second week I was told by Mr. Robinson, the treasurer, that I must wait for my money, as the houses were nearly reduced to half-price. This seemed strange, considering the receipts of the half-price might fairly have been attributed to the new melodrame ; but the argument made use of was a very good one, namely, that the latter could not be played without a first piece before it ; consequently, those actors, the working machinery of the house, must be paid, seemingly, out of the money attracted by me. The theatre was doing badly, although the first piece was *Ivanhoe*, the opera, with Phillips, Wood, and Miss

Paton in it, whose salaries were something enormous. I did not complain—I never did—but went a tour, I forget where. During my absence, I saw by the papers that the theatre was to be sold: a complete revolution having taken place. I thought then all hope of payment for the “Devil’s Elixir,” was at an end; so having spent all my money, I came home to work again. An agreeable surprise, however, awaited me, for the theatre did not sell, and Miss Fanny Kemble having appeared made such a tremendous hit, that a complete reaction had taken place, and I found on my table, amongst many other notes not quite so pleasant, one from Mr. Robinson, who requested to see me. I went, and had the pleasure to receive, with many *thanks* from the worthiest of treasurers, a cheque for £150.

July 15th, 1829. My poetry, unpretending and simple as it was, began to recommend me to composers, I wrote for Mr. Hawes a libretto to “Die Rauber-

brant, the Robber's Bride," the music by Ferdinand Ries. It was well supported by H. Phillips, Sappio, Perkins, Ransford, Salter, J. Russell, Miss Betts, and Miss H. Cause, and produced at the English Opera. You will perceive how different affairs were even at this small distance of time, (only twenty years ago,) in theatricals. A man with a tolerable share of genius and *industry* could turn himself respectably about and gain a genteel living. We had, even then, an opera, a legitimate theatre, and an English opera for *native* talent to display itself in. Where are such appropriate temples now? Echo answers where? I feel that a brief future will restore them. Of all things we want a musical Vaudeville theatre, where young composers might try their scarce fledged wings, before, like the lark, they attempt to soar into the high atmosphere of music.

About this period I was engaged by the house of Goulding and D'Almaine to proceed to Boulogne, in France, to assist Mr., afterwards Sir Henry Bishop, in the

construction of an opera on the subject of Boueldien's *Les Deux Nuits*. It appears that my songs sold exceedingly well, and the manager and the publisher are naturally alike anxious to secure the talent of any individual, without deference or admiration, by whom there is the slightest chance of making money. Speculation is the same everywhere. Mr. Bishop lodged in the Grande Rue. I, (with my wife and daughter, for, like Darius, I could not have travelled without my female establishment,) in some street nearer to the sea, the name of which I cannot at this moment recollect. The vast difference, which, even this slight change from England effects both in the body and mind, is truly amazing. There was only one thing which hung like a nightmare on my spirits all the period of my stay: it was the dread of the frightful seasickness to be renewed on the passage back. Could I have supported myself and family in France, I had *gladly* remained there for ever, rather than again undergo the torture

inflicted by the waves and the steam packet. I could compare it to nothing except a burning wheel flying round and round the head with a grating velocity, incalculable. I must have suffered more than other people, because I observed on landing, others could laugh and eat, while I was compelled to be supported to the hotel and remain for at least a day almost insensible. So changed was my personal appearance, even in crossing from Dover to Calais, that when I landed at the latter place, neither Rodwell nor Stanfield, who were standing on the pier at the time, recognised me! Inside places by the English coach were secured for us, directly I came a little to myself, to proceed to Boulogne, but, having heard so much respecting the cloudless blue sky of France, I was weak enough to suppose, because we were on the other side of the Channel, that the atmosphere must remain for ever, as it actually at that moment appeared, one dome of liquid azure, and therefore thankfully resigned our places in

exchange for others outside, to so many more clear-sighted French people, who had the sagacity to foresee the pelting and pitiless storm which ensued, when we had proceeded about a third of the way on our journey. My heavens ! that journey. Never shall I forget it. Talk of English showers : there was no one drop I think in that *shower* would not have overflowed an engine bucket. The water seemed to boil as it fell. The ground absolutely smoked. At length we were compelled to turn round the coach, stand still, and endure it with our best philosophy, almost crouching under the horses, for at least three quarters of an hour. My wife, who had a purple travelling dress on, became like a female Frankenstein—hands and face of the same imperial dye. And in this triumphant state, after remounting our wet seats, in a perfectly bright and scorchingly provoking sunshine, we entered the far-renowned Boulogne-sur Mer. Yet, annoying as it was, I would rather undergo twenty such peltings of the elements, than

endure one quarter of an hour's sea sickness. I had a certain forewarning of the baneful effects of this malady on some constitutions before I set my foot on the packet at Dover; as, for instance, meeting on the quay a Mr. W——, a bookseller in the Strand, whom I knew well enough, and perceiving that he looked ashy pale, even to his lips. "You are going to try a change of air for your health?" I pityingly inquired. "Not at all," was the reply, "mine is simply a tour of pleasure; but, the fact is, I am sea sick *by anticipation*." Here, then, *was* a case of suffering forestalled and prolonged even beyond my own!!

Pleasantly enough passed the days at Boulogne: eating, drinking, strolling, and bathing, although I was within a very limited distance of being one morning swept away by the eddy, from my ignorance of the nature of the shore, and drowned—and should have been, but for the timely warning of Mr. Rodwell, senr., who, aware of my peril, was watching me most

anxiously from the shore. The days passed rapidly ; not so the work we came to execute ; for, still to do my inspired friend, Sir Henry, justice, he was never a warm advocate for haste over works which required deliberation, while time for that deliberation remained : but when that time no longer remained, he knew better how to apply double the steam than any other professor I had ever, or have ever, since *sailed* with. A spur to prick the sides of our intention speedily arrived in the form of a letter from Soho Square. The opera was already accepted at Covent Garden Theatre ! Therefore, it was highly necessary, so speedily as possible, that it should be forthcoming in London, at all events it was time to make a beginning. Bishop now set to in good earnest, and accordingly we " piped all hands." I wrote, so did the composer, unceasingly, till our toil was ended, and the libretto and score, bound neatly together, forthwith dispatched with all due caution and diligence to head quarters.

I do not quite recollect what plausible excuse was tendered, even by poet or composer, for tarrying behind when the M.S. was already *en route*. Yet do I remember me of a somewhat romantic intention, suggested by Sir Henry, of forthwith proceeding to Paris, in an open voiture of the country, drawn by certain white horses with sweet tinkling bells above their heads. We were to travel by a circuitous route—through roads fringed with clustering apple trees, spreading their luxuriant green arms above our heads, to shelter us from the golden-rayed, but scorching sun. There were to be vine-mantled cottages by the way side, with many stream-tinkling nooks, and the luscious fruit eaten, and the light wine drank from rustic tables, supplied by the most picturesque and pretty landladies that ever smiled in Normandy lappets, or capered in wooden *sabottes*. But alas! for the delusive dreams of poets and composers, all this fairy scene was suddenly put to flight by the startling intelligence that nei-

ther score nor libretto had ever arrived in London! Every inquiry at the diligence office proved unsatisfactory, the parcel had been duly entered, and sent to England by the packet accordingly.

It was now time for us to decamp : and vine-clad vales, and the voiture, with its white, bell'd-steeds, were looked upon as airy hopes which had faded away too suddenly. Our quest must be for realities. The horrible reality of sea sickness was but too certain, amongst them, at least—*pour moi*. However, in my alarm about the loss of the invaluable, I don't think I did suffer quite so much this time ; and, on landing at Dover, was able to proceed to make inquiries concerning the lost opera. At the custom house no person knew anything respecting such an entry. If booked in France it had never arrived in England. Had the greedy waves swallowed our labours ? Certain conviction gave way to despair. We neither knew what to say or how to act, and were about to retire in the

utmost bewilderment and despondency of both heart and mind, when suddenly I perceived a fellow bringing forward a variety of commodities which had been just recovered from the sea, into which it was impossible to tell how they had been immersed. I thought that I recognised, amongst the stray moveables, a certain brown paper parcel, the outline of which was familiar to me, and on casting my eyes over the inscription thereon, notwithstanding its saturated condition, I distinctly traced, in Sir Henry's well-known writing, the words Soho Square. Only fancy; it *was* the identical lost sheep—the veritable opera which, amongst a variety of heaven knows what, had been just rescued from the all devouring fishes. How this happened never staid we to inquire, nor to lose time in vain reproof. The delighted composator clutched the score in his arms, as if it had been his only child, and bore it off with an air of truly parental and triumphant satisfaction, to the Ship Tavern, where a

good substantial *English* dinner awaited our return, with whatever appetite we might; and be sure it was with a much better one than we anticipated on going out. A bumper was quaffed to the unbounded success of *Les Deux Nuits*; or, *the Night before the Wedding*, as it was called, and from its miraculous escape from the vast ocean, great auguries were drawn in favour of its final reception before an *appreciating* British public; who, perhaps, had they known this little history as they know it now, might then have displayed at least a more indulgent taste. *Les Deux Nuits* was not flatteringly received. Madame Vestris, for whom the part of Rose was intended, was *indisposed*, and unable to play it. She had played better parts in her time. And a Mr. Deane, a young man who made his debut in *Valentine*, was anything but equal to the stage, although possessed of a fine voice, but that is not always sufficient, consequently, after a few nights, though *never* disapproved, *Les Deux Nuits* had

ceased to exist—buried, perhaps, in the waves of oblivion.

In the meantime the success of the *Pilot* had continued unabated. It had been revived at the Adelphi for Matthews—the Matthews who superseded Mr. Terry in his share of the management. Of course he enacted the part of Boroughcliff, and sang several of his popular Yankee songs—“*The Hunters of Kentucky*,” &c.

Of Matthews, that extraordinary genius, it would be superfluous to relate any anecdotes, every event of his intellectual life is before the public. He was the true Yorick of his time: we shall never look upon his like again. Worshipped by the public, his nerves were still of so fine a temperament, that, like the chords of an *Æolian* harp, they would tremble, and murmur too, at a breath. Alas! how frequently does this miserable calamity embitter the whole existence of men of talent. Yet, when we conceive that the fineness of the fibre constitutes the beauty of the texture, we must

cease to deplore that altogether as a misfortune, without which, perhaps, perfection were unattainable ; and, as an artist, Matthews *was perfect*.

I wrote now an *entertainment*, for Yates, called "Mr. Chairman ;" it was in the same style as those performed by Matthews—a monodrame ; that is, one actor playing "many parts," and, as Yates gave an excellent imitation of Matthews, he contrived to throw into this performance a vast deal of the other's raciness, if not a vast deal of his originality. One created ; the other improved creation. Speaking of Yates's propensity for imitating Matthews, brings to my recollection a droll anecdote, not unamusing.

During the rehearsal of this very "Mr. Chairman," I noticed, for the first time, that Yates limped a little, and demanded of his valet the cause. "Don't you know ?" inquired the fellow, patronisingly, and surprised. "He broke his leg at Vauxhall !" "Which leg ?" interrogated I. "Can't

say, exactly," was the reply. "*Same leg as Matthen's*, I 'spose!" Matthews had actually broken his leg on some unfortunate occasion, and limped *very much* in consequence.

1830. The *Pilot* had now made its way to Covent Garden Theatre, where it was equally well received as elsewhere—T. P. Cooke sustaining his original part of Long Tom. Up to this period I had produced, (for I was never idle mentally, though sadly so bodily, I confess,) "the Life of Nelson," "The Earthquake," and the "Red Rover," at the Adelphi. They had seventeen versions, Buckstone assured me, of the latter piece sent in, such was the rage for writing nautical pieces, in consequence of the success of Jerrold's beautiful melodrame of "Black Eyed Susan," and the "Pilot;" about the remuneration for which such exaggerated tales went abroad. And as my "Red Rover" was the last written, and only presented when all the rest had been returned, I feel gratified—I feel thankful that I stood

in no man's light; and, in fact, knew nothing about the others, or I should not have attempted the subject—I should not even with my experience have had the courage. Mrs. Edwin played in this drama, who was so celebrated, before my time, for her beauty and talent, when Elliston seceded from Drury Lane to the Olympic, a charming actress, and the remains of her beauty still most fascinating, notwithstanding her years. I do not believe that a more lively impression has been made by any of my pieces than by the “Red Rover.” Signor Paulo was admirable in Guinea, Wilkinson in the Tailor, and T. P. Cooke's Fid was, perhaps, his *very best* performance.

Mr. Bishop, (Sir Henry,) engaged me to write the words for “Ninetta; or, the Maid of Palaiseau,” at Covent Garden, in which Mrs. Wood played Ninetta. I wrote this opera again for Drury Lane some years after, the Covent Garden proprietors refusing to lend their score to the rival theatre, for the purpose of introducing to the

British public the beautiful Madame Albertazzi.* Poor Albertazzi! she died young in a deep decline, as I heard. Her first appearance was at Her Majesty's Theatre in the Haymarket, where she was received with immense approval as Cinderella. The newspapers overflowed with her praises. She was an Englishwoman by birth, and

* This last libretta was written, piece by piece, and sent per post from Peckham. See another interesting note of Bishop's—

“ 4, Albion Place, Hyde Park,
“ Friday Morning.

“ MY DEAR BALL,—

“ The always welcome, (from *you*,) postman's knock
“ came *not* last night at the usual hour, and makes me
“ tremble lest something should have caused delay! How-
“ ever, I must *hope*!

“ You will find that the *dialogue* which brings on *Mor-*
“ *ville* directly before the *Quintetto*, No. 14, must *now* be
“ *restored*, as he does not come on in the *Quintet*, but
“ before it.

“ I feel very anxious to make a great push, and do the
“ *WHOLE* of the *last* *Finale* as I at first gave it you, as it
“ gives something for *Morville* and the others to do—we
“ must try for it

“ Speed, my boy!—Speed—speed—speed! Mind,
“ though, I am not complaining; for you have achieved
“ *wonders*.

“ Ever yours truly,
“ HENRY R. BISHOP.”

her voice and execution have seldom been surpassed by a *foreigner*. She eventually sang in her own language, (English,) not only at Drury Lane, but at the Princesses' Theatre, in Loder's celebrated opera of the "Night Dancers," and always with the same admiration. Her Annette was exquisite, but the impression left on my mind by Mrs. Wood, (Miss Paton,) was not to be erased even by the charms of the bewitching Albertazzi.

CHAPTER VII.

IN 1830, through the interest of my trusty and untiring friend Sir H. Bishop, who seemed determined never to lose sight of me, I was engaged as writer of original ballads and vaudevilles at the Royal Gardens, Vauxhall, under the management of Messrs. Gye and Hughes: and most excellent were the terms I received—added to which, there was something so delightful in the enlightened society of the worthy proprietors, and their families, who vied with each other in showing such unceasing attention and courtesy, that I must have been insensible and ungrateful indeed not to have been very happy in such a position. We were to play vaudevilles, and for that pur-

pose an excellent company had been selected, namely Mrs. Fitzwilliam, Miss Hughes, of Covent Garden, Gattie, T. Cooke, Morley, Stansbury, Williams, Foster, Robinson, and I know not who else. Our first vaudeville was a curtailment of the *Maid of the Oaks*, which succeeded extremely well; when the death of King, (George the Fourth,) and the accession of His Majesty William the Fourth, induced us to change the style of our performances, in accordance with the change in the times. Accordingly, in a very short space of time, I had written a new musical burletta, called

William and Adelaide,

which, being exceedingly national and nautical, was received with universal and marked applause, and ran the whole season; so that my labour, as regarded vaudeville writing, was very light indeed, and as the songs were little or no trouble to me, the *toil* of the season seemed very like a *pleasure*.

It was almost invariably, my happy

fortune to make excellent, and lasting friends wherever I went; but with the Gyes' and the Hughes' a friendship sprung up with both families, which is as fresh at this moment, as it was then; and I have no doubt will last till we are all no more. To say nothing of the esteem which Sir Henry Bishop continued to display towards both me and my family. And just to shew how domestic and unostentatious a popular genius can be, I think I shall be warranted in publishing the following truly kind letter, which I received from him at Margate, during the Vauxhall season; and, also, at a more distant period, a note from Wells, in Somersetshire, shewing how rationally and readily we worked together.

“ 15 Princes' Crescent, Margate.

“ Tuesday, August 31st. 1830.

“ MY DEAR BALL,—

“ As you may probably be *inclining*
“ towards coming to Margate in this week, it
“ has occurred to me to write what, had I

“thought of it earlier, I should have
 “written before, namely, that if you will
 “let me know the *precise day* of your
 “coming, I shall be very happy to look out
 “for a lodging for you here, if you will also
 “say the kind of one you require, the price
 “of it, &c., and though I would not *take it*
 “until you had seen it, I may have found
 “one that will suit you, ready for you to *look*
 “at and *approve*, the moment you arrive.
 “If, also, on alighting from the coach,
 “(which I presume you are resolved to
 “come by,) you will come to us at once,
 “and take some tea, we shall be most
 “happy to see Mrs. Ball, yourself, and
 “Missey. Your luggage may remain at the
 “coach office, or be sent here, and you can,
 “after tea, proceed to look at any apart-
 “ments I may previously have seen, or at
 “any others.

“*At all events*, oblige me with a line,
 “BY RETURN OF POST, saying what are your
 “intended movements, as your letter, if
 “received by me on Thursday morning, will

"regulate some movement of *mine*, which
"I will afterwards explain to you. The
"weather here is truly delightful.

"I had some thoughts of going to town
"to-morrow, for a day or two, but certain
"circumstances have changed that intention.

"I am desired to present best
"regards, &c., &c.,

"And remain,

"Sincerely Yours,

"HENRY R. BISHOP."

"P.S. Should I be troubling you in
"requesting you to call at Drury Lane,
"to enquire whether Mr. Alex. Lee is in
"town or not? Perhaps Mapleson could
"inform you this—but I wish to know *in*
"your letter,*

Wells, Somersetshire.

November 28th, 1833.

"MY DEAR BALL,—

"Many thanks for your alteration

* I could not go to Margate, as I had promised, on account of my various engagements, which at one time were so numerous as to detain me in town twelve years.

“ of ‘ Pretty Jane,’ received at Bath.
 “ But I want you now to do me one of the
 “ greatest favours you *ever* did me ! Off-
 “ hand, will you oblige me by writing me a
 “ song to the measure and style of the
 “ inclosed song ? Anything, so that it can
 “ bear the title of *The Merry Mountaineer*,
 “ and so that it can be sung by a *female* ;
 “ light and playful, and taking care that
 “ no one of *these* words are touched upon,
 “ of course, excepting to begin with “ Oh
 “ *merrily*,” or “ When *merrily*,” you can
 “ take any subject, so that it is graceful and
 “ pretty. Now pray do this for me, and
 “ send it without fail, by SATURDAY NIGHT’S
 “ post, to Post Office, Taunton, Somers-
 “ setshire !! Mrs. B. sends best regards,

“ Ever yours, truly,

“ HENRY R. BISHOP.”

I had the good luck also, here to make some veritable hits in my songs. In *My Dog and my gun*, &c. *My Pretty Jane*, inimitably sung by Robinson, made quite a furore ; and was encored every night of

the season. Sims Reeves has taken up the air, lately, and charmingly he renders it, but it ought to be sung in the open air ; under the moonlit summer trees, as at Vauxhall. It almost always happens, that which is least thought of by the inventor, is the point which tells best with the public. Bishop thought nothing of the melody of *My Pretty Jane* ; I do not believe that he would have consented to its being sung, but in a moment of necessity, when no other new song could be supplied for Robinson. Of the words, I felt there was nothing to boast ; I had, I imagined, even at the gardens, written so many better, which were scarcely noticed. Yet, notwithstanding all these forebodings, and want of self-confidence, that melody, and those words, have never been lost sight of by the public, for *twenty* years. I was absolutely assured, not long since, that five hundred pounds had been refused for their undivided copyright. The unaffected simplicity of the words, may give some idea of how little

difficulty there is, *sometimes*, in pleasing the public, if one always knew the way how to accomplish it.

Ballad.

My pretty Jane! My dearest Jane!
 Ah, never look so shy;
 But meet me in the evening,
 When the bloom is on the rye:
 The summer nights are coming, love,
 The corn is in the ear—
 The nightingale is singing, love,
 The moon shines bright and clear
 Then Pretty Jane! My dearest Jane &c.

Oh! name the day, the wedding day,
 And I will buy the ring: *
 The Bridal Maids in garlands gay—
 And village bells shall ring.
 Then pretty Jane, my dearest Jane,
 Ah, never look so shy:
 But meet me in the evening,
 When the bloom is on the rye.

Templeton was with us also; his fine clear, bell-like voice told wonderfully. And the Scotch ballad I wrote for him, "Mine ain hame," could not have been better

* George Lindley, the poet, was the first to point out a little oversight here, in making ring rhyme with ring. It is a defect; but I prefer giving the song as it was sung. In my published work, the *House to Let*, and other poems and ballads, I have corrected it.

given by Rubini himself, admitting that Rubini could have sung a ballad at all, especially a Scotch one. Then there was sweet Kitty Tunstall, with her merry song about "Isn't it a pity!" That *was* ballad singing, *real* ballad singing.

Nor was this all; a simple trio, called "Here's a health to the King and the Queen," which I wrote in the opening of the foregoing Vaudeville, became quite popular; while, as is often the case, a much more important, and *cumbrous* compliment to royalty, proved quite a failure.

But sunny as this narrative appears, let it not be imagined that I had no spots in my sunshine; I frequently got assailed by reviewers, especially in the Sunday papers, and a paper, called the Figaro, from the effects of which I suffered greatly, and but for the approval of the public, should have believed myself all they said I was; ignorant, stupid, an ass.

One day, a short time since, a little piece of justice was done me, in this respect; I

called in at a popular composer's to speak about the words of a song which I had been requested to write for Jenny Lind, when, seeing on the piano, an oil painting of a Zingara, or gipsey, I was greatly impressed by its charms, colour, tone, and beauty; and as I am very enthusiastic in my admiration of works of genius, I did not spare the commendations I felt to be so amply deserved.

"This is the artist!" exclaimed the composer, turning round and introducing a stranger, whom, till then, I had not perceived. "He is going to Australia!"

"Australia! Is it possible? Leave England, the patron of all the arts, with *such* talent?" I remarked with surprise, without wishing to be impertinently complimentary.

He gazed at me with a mingled air of satisfaction and remorse. "I am not fortunate in *my* undertakings," he said. "More fortunate in painting, perhaps, than in any other pursuit, because my abilities, as a

painter, borrow more largely from that from which *you* borrow everything, and to which alone you owe your popularity "

" And pray what may that be ?" I somewhat confusedly inquired, not in the least comprehending him.

" *Nature !*" was the reply.

My friend of the piano looked with delighted surprise and approval on the speaker, who paid me so refined a compliment. For me, I felt that it was, I could not tell for what end, a piece of flattery. He would not allow me to interrupt him.

" I wrote formerly," he continued, "for the stage : I wrote for the *papers* : I never succeeded by the stage, while you always succeeded. I could have abused—injured you, probably : they, the others, did—the *disappointed* authors. It was *their* consolation."

" You never did me an injustice, of that kind, I feel quite *certain*," I interrupted.

" No ; you judge me rightly, believe me—I did *not*. And it was after a highly-

deserved reception conferred on one of your operas, that I sat myself down with several of my colleagues in question, and we mutually put the question—How is it that this *fellow*, with so small a modicum of brains, so invariably pleases? We sifted your words—we burlesqued your speeches—we analysed your plot—we mooted your whole libretto stupid; and yet, lastly, came to the discovery of your great secret, which all present, even those who loved you least, still liberally allowed—it was NATURE. Do not ask of me, after this conclusion, what critiques *were written*, even on this very occasion. It will gratify you, I hope, to learn, on that, and many *such occasions*, what was *thought*."

And who does not believe that it is much easier to abuse a bad play than to write a better?

I am happy to say, however, in this era a more liberal set of men write for the papers: *gentlemen* who have reputations to compromise. I know many of them, and

highly respect them and their opinions. At the same time, I do not assert this because I wish on any occasion to mitigate their remarks; while I acknowledge my vanity in asserting that I do not recollect ever having requested a *single* favour of any public writor in my life—*nor do I ever intend it*. A public man is public property; so are his works. I offer it, however, as the conviction, (of an individual only,) that all critiques on *public* works, ought to bear *publicly* the *name* of the reviewer.

In October, 1830, I find myself again at the Adelphi, bringing out a new, and exceedingly *original* spectacle, called by the astounding appellation of *The Black Vulture*; in other words, the Ixion of the ancients. It met with an excellent reception. O. Smith was the *Vulture*!! And well might he say to me, on that, or some other occasion, that he had determined to sell his hoofs, horns, and tail, and play the devil no longer. He did so, I believe, and tried on the *owld* legitimate. Most excel-

lent was he in it ; yet, lately, I saw him perform something at the Haymarket very Mephistopholish in the "Devil's Violin," where, in enumerating the imps and demons of a catalogue of friends, he talked something about Belphegor, Zamiel, and O. Smith, as if he had tadpoled back into the actual demon, and as Matthews would have said "rekiver arms !" When one sees O. Smith enacting a legitimate part, one thinks it would amount to profanation to transform him again into that of a demon : yet, when one witnesses his assumption of the demon, one thinks that such a *devilish* good demon ought never more to step back into frail humanity. Since this was written poor O. Smith is no more. Like one of the rich, many-coloured leaves of the sunset of the old drama, he has fallen off with many others of his time, whose places are very ill-supplied by the monotonous tint of the young spring leaves which I have seen yet ensue.

August 4th, 1831. I wrote the libretta of a new original opera called the "Sorceress," composed by Ferdinand Ries, and produced under the management of Mr. Arnold, whose company played at the Adelphi, (their own theatre having been unfortunately consumed by fire.) This opera had originally been a melodrame, founded on some German tale, called "*Black Naddock*." I dramatised it for Elliston, who wrote me the following quaint note in returning the M.S., by which you will perceive I, in my turn, had my pieces returned, like other people—

" June 15th, 1830.

" MY DEAR SIR,—

" I have perused your drama entitled
" '*Black Naddock*,' and think it decidedly
" one of your best pieces. I have not
" time, however, now to devote to its scenery;
" but if you should not have disposed of it

" before September, I shall be very much

" inclined to produce it.

" Believe me, dear Sir,

" In all good wishes,

" Yours truly,

" R. W. ELLISTON.

" To E. Fitzball."

This opera was too heavy, and too Germanic, and required, above all things, *melody*, without which, no opera can ever succeed, whatever merit *else* it may possess. This season, also, I renewed my engagement at Vauxhall. Mr. and Mrs. Keely were with us for the vaudevilles. We produced the "Bottle of Champagne," with Bishop's music, in which Mrs. Keely was, as she always is in everything she undertakes, most excellent. A very laughable piece was also brought out, called "The Fillip on the Nose," wherein Keely electrified the audience. It surprises me that I have not seen this burletta played elsewhere. Not only Keely, but Mrs. Keely charmed every-

body by her *naïve*, sprightly, and natural acting, and her ballad singing. It was curious that we should meet thus in after years: I was once on a visit at Mrs. Cobbold's at Holy Wells; there was a large party, and a *protégé* of Mrs. Cobbold—a most extraordinary and gifted child was to play the harp. Everybody was in the drawing room; the servants all running here and there to wait upon the guests; when happening to cross a passage, I saw a little child, with eyes refulgent with intelligence, trying to lift a harp nearly three times taller than herself, with all the intention of a giant, and carry it into the drawing-room. Of course, the attempt was fruitless, and I, much amused, gladly executed the task for her. I never saw that interesting child again, till, one evening, she recognised me in the green room of Covent Garden. It was the already popular Miss Goddard—my fairy of the harp: now the inimitable Mrs. Keeley.

Amongst the numerous attractions pre-

sented at the gardens this season, were some curious optical illusions. You saw a basket of fruit, which *retreated* as you *advanced* to touch it. Through a telescope you looked at a *dead* wall, and beheld a *living* person, who was nowhere else to be seen! These remarkable novelties were introduced by young Frederick Gye, whose early taste in ornamenting the gardens gave that immense promise, since so amply realised in his indescribable decorations of Drury Lane, both at the promenade concerts and bal masques, to say nothing of the style of perfection which he contrives to throw over everything connected with his management of the Italian Opera, Covent Garden Theatre.

During all these excitements, I had lost both my brother and my mother. He died first; my mother, who was far advanced in years, did not long survive him.

On the occasion of my mothers funeral, I returned once again to the old village. I could scarcely bring myself to believe that

the houses had not grown much smaller !— that the neighbourhood had not become less. All seemed so unlike the picture I had carried away in my heart. The charm of the place was gone. I scarcely knew my favourite haunts, and marvelled that I had once considered them so lovely. And so it is : past things measured by years of regret, when approached in after time, melt like the rainbow, it may be, into tears.

One thing amused me during my stay. As a matter of curiosity, they showed me, at Burwell, a small statue resembling the Virgin, carved in an ancient wall, which *they* said had been recently discovered, and proved, *beyond a doubt*, that this wall had formerly been part of either a nunnery or a chapel. It might have been, so far as regarded the wall, but for the *Virgin*, she remained as a specimen of my *own* handy-work when I was a lad. So you see how your antiquarians may be misled or bewildered. There is an old cave, at Royston, in Herefordshire, which you are per-

mitted, for a trifle, to descend, by a private entrance, there being no other, through a house. In this gloomy retreat, it seems, a lady hermitess lived in the days of Thomas à Becket. She died in this cave; her tomb is there, with her effigy above it. It was an imitation of this effigy, cut by me in the wall, which was now mistaken for the Virgin of the supposed chapel.

It was about this period that I first became acquainted with *the* Miss Kelly—that inimitable child of nature. She first acted for me in a melodrama called the “Soldier’s Widow; or, the Deserted Mill”—the music by Barnett*—at the Adelphi, (still occupied by the English Opera company.) Of course Fanny represented the Soldier’s Widow, and Perkins her reprobate lover.†

* Composer of the *Mountain Sylph*.

† It appears by my diary that Planché was acting manager. One day he was unable or not disposed to attend a rehearsal. Mr. Perkins and Miss Kelly rated him for this, to which Planché, with great shrewdness, not unmingled with satire, replied—“I suppose I have as *much right* to be ill, *if I please*, as other people.” Alluding, no doubt, to the frequent plea of illness made an excuse as by Perkins and Miss Kelly for not attending rehearsals.

But, at night, as the latter part created more sensation than the former, it was not difficult to perceive that my heroine was *disappointed*; and, as she had an immense and deserved interest with the manager, the piece died a natural death: existing, I believe, only six or twelve nights—in fact, a *failure*. It is by no means pleasant in such cases to an author. But such are our vicissitudes. There are frequently *others* to please, *more difficult* than the *public*. Neither, in a business sense, was Miss Kelly wrong in declining to play a part unsuited in the experiment, to her force: viz., which did not afford her sufficient opportunity. It is as bad as for a singer to sing out of his voice. On Miss Kelly, at this time, depended the principal receipts of the theatre, and it was highly necessary, for the benefit and well-doing of the establishment, for attraction sake alone, that she should only be placed in such a light as to render her merits paramount with the public. I had now experienced

quite enough of theatrical *finesse* thoroughly to understand this, and was satisfied.

Strange, however, to say, a far better fate than condemnation awaited the "Soldier's Widow;" or, rather "The Deserted Mill." Wilde, who was then manager at the Queen's, and almost, as he told me himself, in a state of ruin, applied to me, (the then popular quack on such occasions,) for an *attractive* drama. In jest, and as an excuse, for I was very busy, I alluded to my late failure, "The Deserted Mill." He wished to produce it. I consented. He gave me even better terms than Mr. Arnold. The talented Mrs. Selby good-naturedly undertook the part lately sustained by Miss Kelly, and succeeded in it to a marvel. I was fortunate in the selection of Mrs. Selby, an excellent actress, and a most sensible woman. Her figure was better suited to the part than Miss Kelly's, which was too delicate; Mrs. Selby's was stately and commanding—added to which, she fought a broad sword combat with great skill and

effect. I am modest enough to acknowledge that this same combat had, perhaps, even more tendency to the prosperity of the drama than its literary merits. Be that as it may, "The Deserted Mill" made an unusual hit, ran upwards of one hundred consecutive nights, and absolutely restored the finances of the season. How fortunate for an author who can find a second theatre to vindicate himself in. I have frequently imagined that a theatre for *rejected pieces* might be more likely to succeed with the *public*. The public is seldom or ever prejudiced or wrong.

Again Miss Kelly played for me in the "Eagle's Nest," at the Olympic. It was the interesting tale of the dillosk gatherer, who rescues her child from the eagle's nest. Every one has seen the popular print on that subject. This time, also, we were equally unfortunate. Not, however, from any failure of the drama, nor of the acting, which, so far as Miss Kelly was concerned, was sublime.

It would have been quite sufficient to have immortalised her as an actress, had she never personated any other part than this poor Dillok mother. Her breathless movement, in cowering round the stage, to watch the eagle to its nest, wherein her child was supposed to have been deposited, is indescribable. It was one of those exquisite delineations of human feeling, which must be witnessed to be understood, much more described. The mother's courage, overcoming her woman's fear, at discharging the gun, after having loaded it herself, at the eagle, so as not to wound the child it carried in its talons, was another magnificent conception, magnificently executed. But these were the sort of points on which Miss Kelly's great mind fixed itself; and without *such* points she could not display the power of her vast intellectual strength, which was truly astounding and overwhelming. I wish I had the gift to do her justice. The Dillok Gatherer failed, notwithstanding, to attract. The *cholera* broke out in

London ; people were naturally terrified, or had no longer any desire to enter the doors of theatres. It was a truly awful calamity. One was almost afraid to enquire after one's friends, or acquaintance. Every face you encountered at home or in the street, wore a look of consternation and dismay ; every heart seemed agitated with a dreadful apprehension. Under these melancholy circumstances, it is not to be wondered at, that theatricals were at a low ebb ; or that solemn thoughts and prayers, to the unceasing tolling of the funeral church bell, should supersede the dramatic artificial scene of woe and imaginary grief.

I trust I shall be excused here, for paying a little tribute to worthy Davy Grove, at that time prompter for the English Opera. Poor Davy was one of the very old school ; when actors and actresses sat around a table, and performed a whole comedy, (the legitimate drama,) when the actor made a hit with a twirl of *his* cane ; and the actress with a twirl of *her* fan ; Davy had a great

— horror, not of me, but of what he called my abominable introductions to the perfect upsetting of the regular business of the regular stage. In what he termed the *rational* scenes of the *rational* drama, he could sit quietly, in his stuffed chair, P.S., (something like the old Charlies, before the new police came in,) and give the word, or ring up, or down, without stirring from his seat the whole evening; take a nap at intervals, and all went well. Now, thanks to my monstrous example, there was to run about the stage the whole night; to ring up this trap, to ring down that; signals to be made, with flags, as if one were working a telegraph, and not a theatre. Of such a nature were poor Davy's lamentations over the new fangled system of ruin, as he termed it, till he retired from the stage, most respected, and I am happy to add, perfectly independent. A few verses I addressed to him on the occasion, may not be unamusing to the amusable reader; for the unamusable

as Madame de Maintenon said, it is hopeless to write.

Lines to Davy Grove, Esq., prompter, on his retirement from the stage.

So, Davy, you're going to leave us,
Your equal we never shall see;
The parting will bitterly grieve us—
The very idea grieves me.

I know how the leaves, in the autumn,
Will fall, dearest Davy, away,
And spring-time bring plenty of others,
More green, more refreshing than they.

But where shall we look for a prompter,
So kind, so attentive as you?
Your mildness, good nature, forbearance,
Oh! how I appreciate now!

And thus 'tis with all things, heaven mend us!
So frail are we compounds of earth,
In the loss of each good the fates send us,
We only discover its worth.

Then pardon, friend Davy, I pray do,
Past follies, that gave you *such* pain;
And set you to caper away so,
In thunder, in lightning, in rain.

E'en devils I've made o'er you hover—
In brimstone, in whirlpool, and gust:
And waves I have caused you to cover,
Not, Davy, with *water*, but *dust*.

I've been to you, troublesome, ever,
Have made you to ring, whistle, stamp,
I've put you, full oft, in a fever—
But, did I not cure your *cramp*?

Believe me! believe me, *friend Davy*,
Whenever you bid us good bye—
Amongst your best wishers, *dear Davy*,
You'll not find *one truer than I*.

EDWARD FITZBALL.

September 20th., 1830.

It has been frequently enquired why I changed my name from Ball, to Fitzball; which many have treated as an affectation. The true state of the case is: It was done from no affectation, but to oblige the publishers; the songs of a Mr. W. Ball, having so frequently been sent, in their country orders by mistake, for mine, or mine for his; it became necessary, they said, to make a more marked distinction in the names; consequently, I adopted, before that of my father, the Norman name of my *mother*.

From 1831 to 1833, as I kept no notes or diary, I cannot be responsible for *dates*. I perceive, however, there were sundry pieces, by me, produced. "The Sea Serpent," and "Robert the Devil," (in conjunction with Buckstone), at the Adelphi; as regards the

latter, at one of the rehearsals, I remember a curious circumstance took place ; a young girl, playing a resuscitated nun, in the act of being elevated, or rather, pushed up from her stone coffin, slipped through the trap, opening at her feet, to admit the rising of a second nun, but, fortunately, alighted on the shoulders of the spectre from the lower regions. This ridiculous position, absurd as it may appear, providentially saved the first girl's life, for the depth was at least twelve feet ; she must have been dashed to death.* Imagine the consternation of the two poor girls, in this ridiculous attitude, both being *masked*, and quite unable to perceive each other. It was well it was no worse. It was extraordinary that I wrote also, this season, the *poetry* for an opera, (Haynes Bayley's,) at Drury Lane, called *Der Alchymist* ; the music by Sphor, and adapted by Bishop. I wrote the words at Brighton, and being exceedingly ill at the time, never saw the

* Young Grimaldi perished by a similar accident.

opera performed ; nor attended rehearsals ;
It failed.

The papers condemned me as the writer of a blundering drama, which had destroyed Mr. Haynes Bayley's *beautiful* poetry. Now as this poetry, beautiful poetry as they called it in mistake, was mine, and the piece Mr. Bayley's, I could not endure the impertinence, and wrote a letter of remonstrance to the most abusive of the papers, The National Omnibus, as follows :

To the editor of the National Omnibus.

" SIR,—

" In reply to your remarks of yesterday,
" I beg leave distinctly to state, that I am
" not the *author* of Der Alchymist.

" I have the honour to be,

Sir,

" Your obedient servant,

" EDWARD FITZBALL.

March 24th, 1832.

Mark how an editor can turn round, and play the chamelion : " After all we were

“only *half* wrong, as we have been given “to understand that Mr. Fitzball is the “author of the songs; and Mr. Haynes “Bayley the *perpetrator* of the *dramatic* “portion.” So, in fact, had this amiable friend of mine, the editor, conceived that it could have been possible for me, under my circumstances, to have written the poetry in a piece of Mr. H. Bayley’s, (which does indeed appear strange, but he was ill, and could not finish the piece,) he would just as freely have abused the *poetry*, as he did the dramatic portion of the work; whichever way suited his malice or his interest. But he was rather caught in his own trap, and exposed to the contempt which such reviewers richly deserve. But such reviews have long ago lost their caste; I do hope, for the sake of *others*, to renew it, as the raven said, “*never more*.”

At this period, there was a knot of these petty authors, indulging themselves in penny papers of abuse, against every one that succeeded, and imagining in their own

conceit, no doubt, that nothing was so well done, but that any individual of them could have done it better; I cannot forget a droll remark made by the facetious Buckstone, about them. "I should like," he said, "to give twenty of them, each a pen, a quire of paper, and a bottle of ink; then shut them up, separately, in twenty closets, and see which would come out with an *original* piece."

Then came "Andreas Hofer" at the Surrey, for Mrs. W. West, in my mind, one of the best actresses of my time. Her voice was music; her deportment ladylike in the extreme. Mrs. West was a striking example that it is possible for a gentlewoman to be upon the stage, in all conditioned theatres, and *remain* a gentlewoman. This melodrama succeeded, but was not attractive; it was too high an attempt for the Surrey; or the Surrey was out of tune, as theatres are sometimes.

At the request of Mr. Bunn, at Drury Lane Theatre, I also adapted an opera for

De Pinna, called the "Enchanted Lute," and wrote the words of a musical ballet, the "Maid of Cashmere," (The Bayadere,) the music by Bishop, which was produced with infinite success, at the same theatre. The lovely Duverney playing the Bayadere ; and an exquisite Bayadere she made. She was indeed the poetry of motion.

"The Enchanted Lute," in its original state, from its extreme length, was unactable. After I had adapted and cut it, De Pinna, who heard it re-read, expressed his astonishment, observing that it seemed to have been touched by a magician's wand ; It was reduced to *such an extreme*, yet nothing taken away. It succeeded very well in representation ; the music, by De Pinna, was beautiful ; but it was not, after all, brought out at Drury Lane, but at Covent Garden, and given many nights, and afterwards played at the Lyceum. I forget how all this occurred ; nor is it, here, of import ; who the real author was, I knew not ; it was Captain Polhill, from

whom I received my remuneration, when I was afterwards reader at the Theatre Royal, Covent Garden ; and did my utmost to place his, or rather, Mr. De Pinna's opera before the public, with those advantages which it so well deserved. I am surprised that De Pinna has never written any other known work for the stage. It makes my heart ache when I think on the *neglected* talent in *this* country, which only requires a *few* rays of sunshine to render it equal, if not superior, to that of any other land in the world. George Rodwell. some time ago, made a laudable attempt to establish *something* like a national opera ; and published a prospectus to that effect ; but his endeavours, so zealously, and so praiseworthy set about, were seconded by professors themselves with so much apathy and supineness, and so much *selfishness*, that the outsetting champion retired from the field in disgust, and the whole affair fell, from inertia, to the ground. How differently these things are abroad, where

professors cling manfully together, and like the German students, fight their own battles, and command their own victories.

It was in April 1833, that I received a visit from Mr. Osbaldiston, requesting me to write him a new melo-drama, on any subject that I might think it best to select. I reminded him, as I had previously reminded Wilde, on a like occasion, of my ill success in my recent production, *Hofer*, (to his own loss,) one of my most pains-taking productions, which failed to bring money at his own theatre, the Surrey, notwithstanding the fine acting of Mrs. W. West, the comic drolleries of Sam Vale and clever little Rogers, and the most picturesque scenery by Tomkins.

“We cannot account for these things,” was Osbaldiston’s manly and spirited reply, “notwithstanding the non-attraction of *Hofer*, which *ought* to have drawn considerably, I am quite willing to give you the same terms, (the best terms I apprehend ever given at the Surrey,) for another

drama; and the sooner you can let us have it, the better; for we are *sadly* distressed."

"And have you any subject?" I enquired nervously, (Sometimes the managers supply the subject.) "No! write whatever you will; I'll produce it." I arose, unlocked my bookcase, and looked into a volume of narratives. "Here is a name," I observed, "which strikes me. It is called,

"Jonathan Bradford."

"What is the story?"

"I know not! I never noticed even the name, till now."

"Well, the title is a good one, and there is something in a *name* after all. *Do it!* And when shall I hear of you, or *see* you, with, at least, the first act?"

"Oh! very soon!" was the usual reply, "At all events, you may rely on my *industry*."

"I rely upon more than that, I rely upon your unfailing genius, or I should be somewhat afraid, in my present emergency,

to offer you such conditions." Osbaldiston was by no means a flatterer; and therefore, from such a matter of fact man, such an expression was a very high compliment; and well *worth having*.

On perusal, I found that Jonathan Bradford contained the essence of what I required, and I could draw upon my own imagination for the rest; which I determined to do. Here was a gentleman who had lost by his last speculation with me; and yet he had come openly and manfully, again, offering me the same conditions, and relying, unflinchingly upon my abilities, still to do him service. I felt all this deeply; what honourable mind could have done otherwise. I wished to repay him his loss; I wished to requite his confidence; I wished also, to re-establish my credit in a theatre, once so full of approval, yet, where my last work was received so coldly. How was all this to be accomplished? and by what magic? It was not by literature!—it was not by poetry!—it was not by mirth!—it

was not by *tears*!—all of which had been tried in Hofer.

It might be by a harmony of the whole ; with a spice or two of *original* effect, thrown in at intervals. The attempt was made ; the effort succeeded, in its result, beyond any drama I had yet presented to the public ! It was marvellous ; and in a drama all opposed to the good opinion of manager and actor. That managers should be so frequently mistaken, surprises me ; actors, generally speaking, in hearing a play read, ingeniously shut their ears to every portion of the book, saving their own parts.

Having written my drama of "Jonathan Bradford," I took it myself to the manager, who resided at that time in Prospect Place. He was a man for whom I always considered it a great pleasure to write. He had none of that smooth double-facedness which managers in general consider it necessary to assume towards popular authors, (so disgusting to rational minds,) at the same time he did not wound the feelings of

the unpopular by a haughty, tinsel-crowned arrogance, which I have seen some assume, whose origin, if not their education, should have taught them better; neither did he turn any author into ridicule *behind his back*, as I have seen practised within a brief space by a manager to a very respectable writer, much more talented than himself, by sticking his tongue into his cheek and winking at his servile acting manager, indicating by such elegant dumb show, that he had got rid of the "scrub" and his M.S., when perhaps that M.S. might have turned out a fortune. Such things have been followed by ruin, as these pages tend to prove, of which that gentlemanly and sapient manager was so deserving, and who, despite his own *acting*, or any actual hit, has since had sufficient time to put his tongue into his cheek and reflect in a *prison*.

The following morning, on calling in Prospect Place to learn the impression made by my new melodrame, I met Osbaldiston in the garden, the M.S. in his hand, a

cloud upon his brow. Jonathan did not meet with *his* approbation. Still he would keep the M.S. for a future occasion, as he had ordered it, pay me the terms agreed on, and I must write another piece.

Liberal as this proposal seemed, it was impossible for me to accept it. I was otherwise occupied for Mr. Arnold, at the English opera, and must attend to my engagements. There remained no alternative save and except to enact "Jonathan Bradford," which the manager, as a matter of *necessity*, eventually agreed to do. It was a great drawback to discover, as Osbaldiston already had, I fancy, that this same subject had been previously essayed at the Theatre Royal Drury Lane, and fearfully failed. Of course I had anticipated nothing of this. It was a great damper even to myself. But the piece was not an expensive one to produce, and I strongly urged the attempt.

It was read in the green-room. Henry Wallack, who was to play Dan Macraisy,

quitted the green-room before its conclusion: no great compliment to the author, (although he was the author's *friend*, and played the hero "Wallace" in his *first* tragedy,) but the fact was, he was frightened, and for *me*. When it came to the four room scene, everyone stared at each other, asking mute questions with their eyes, like people who look over a game of chess, without comprehending a single move. When the reading came to a conclusion, some glided mysteriously one way, some another, as if afraid of being trapped into an opinion. Dear Mrs. West, who was cast for Ann Bradford, certainly did say to me in some consternation, as she crossed the stage—"You are an *extraordinary* writer; I never heard anything like it. How are people to act in *FOUR rooms at once?*" I cannot understand it; but I perceive, by your looks, that you *understand it yourself*." She, nevertheless, with great earnestness, advised Osbaldiston to rely on me.

Then came the comparing of parts; then

the rehearsals. One part of my system was never to go near them till they had made some progress, and vented all their little grievances and annoyances on the head of the poor author. I felt it invariably did them good to allow this, and did me no harm; because, as the work unravelled and dovetailed itself, silent conviction generally came home to them, with a palm branch for the author. From "Jonathan Bradford," however, there was no staying away. Every half hour I was sent for by a double express. They had got into a sad *muddle*, to use a Norfolk expression, and a round robin was constituted to induce Osbaldiston to insist on my leaving out this perplexing, unexampled, undramatic, unactable four-roomed scene. He urged!—I had the temerity to refuse. The argument I made use of was this: "You tell me that your theatre is in a bad state. The scanty audiences which I, myself, witness nightly, confirm the truth of your assertion. You are in a desperate, in a dying condi-

tion. You come to me as a last resource—as a doctor who is to cure you—nothing will cure you but a *desperate* remedy. Leave out the rhubarb, or the senna, or a single particle thereof, and I withdraw—must withdraw my prescription; because the remedy would then become as hopeless as the case.

“Screw but *your* courage to the sticking place, do not depend on my courage, or, in a moment of caprice, or pride, or wounded feelings, I am weak, and may give way. I *rely* upon the success of this result. I consider that *my* reputation is as much at risk as your interest. I would reclaim both. But if *you* prove not firm, my attempt is fruitless—must fall to the ground. I am simply the author—you the manager: please yourself.”

Perceiving me so much in earnest, he became very resolute to accede to my injunction; and although sad murmurings were heard, during the rehearsals in the four boxes, (the four-room scene,) where

the performers could neither see each other, nor hear each other's voices. As the night of representation approached, more than one of the actors began to unravel, and to catch a glimpse of that singular effect, and to anticipate a favourable result; though such a result as actually did ensue, was far, even from my own sanguine hopes, and much more so, I imagine, from those of the manager.

On Wednesday, June 12th, 1833, as the play bills state, was presented, (never before acted,) an entirely new, original, domestic drama, written expressly for this theatre, by the author of "The Red Rover," "Inkeeper of Abbeville," "Flying Dutchman," "Soldier's Widow," "Pilot," &c., &c., called

JONATHAN BRADFORD;

OR,

The Murder at the Roadside Inn.

The scenery by Marshall.* Music by Jolly.

This Original Drama

Is founded on *real* facts: Jonathan Brad-

* Now of Her Majesty's Theatre.

ford *actually* kept an inn on the London road to Oxford, and bore an unexceptionable character. The extraordinary affair which led to the *construction of this drama*, was the conversation of the whole kingdom. The innocent and unfortunate landlord, accused of a cruel murder, perpetrated under his very roof, and, borne down by a train of overwhelming *circumstantial evidence*, in vain pleaded not guilty. All conspired to condemn him ; his assertions were of no avail ; never was presumptive conviction more strong. There was little need of comment from the judge, in summing up the evidence, and the jury brought in the prisoner guilty without going out of the box. He was hanged ; and, he was innocent.

Jonathan Bradford . Mr. Osbaldiston.

Dan Macraisy . . Mr. H. Wallack.

Caleb . . . Mr. Vale.

Nelson . . . Mr. Rumbal.

Hayes . . . Mr. Dibdin Pitt.

Rackbottle . . . Mr. Rogers.

Bradford's Wife . . Mrs. Wm. West.

Sally . . . Miss Vincent.

The theatre had fallen, somehow, into bad repute just now, and the house was not altogether so crowded as had been anticipated. It was a *good* house, however, and "Jonathan Bradford" was represented for the first time. It was a *good* reception: not a great one. When it came to the four-roomed scene, the audience looked at each other exactly in the same fashion as the actors had done at the reading. They seemed to retire like *one* mind, an instant, within themselves, and then, as if convinced, on reflection, that there was something original to applaud, which they did not quite comprehend, from its newness to their taste, like all *English* audiences, they took the lenient side, and applauded unanimously, not vociferously; immediately on the fall of the drop, at the end of the first act, the conversation in boxes, pit, and the enormous gallery, became so general, so buzzing, evidently on the subject of what they had just witnessed, that it was almost

impossible to distinguish one single voice from the other.

Up went the drop again. All the clamour hushed in an instant—you might have heard a pin fall; till it came to the scene in the church vault, where Jonathan turns the tables upon Dan Macraisy, and rescues poor Caleb from his rascally clutches. The house then became apparently electrified Osbaldiston; who had a fine firm voice, and was an excellent declaimer, gave the speech its due effect—

Jon. Yes, monster; that Jonathan Bradford whom you would so wantonly have sacrificed: the husband of a devoted wife, the father of children, whom you would have plunged into irretrievable infamy. Heaven hath heard my prayers—heaven sent me hither seeking concealment, even in a tomb—to witness for *myself*—to avenge—to punish.

Act II., Scene 4.

I will spare myself from descanting upon the approbation conferred on this domestic drama; I will simply place before the reader a part of a second play bill, which

may speak better than a volume written by the author—

Surrey Theatre.

A N N O U N C E M E N T .

The highly interesting and effective drama of
JONATHAN BRADFORD,
Notwithstanding its having been performed
in this theatre *one hundred and twenty*
nights, will continue to be repeated without
intermission during the ensuing *months of*
October and November.

It ran 264 consecutive nights ; and was
said to have brought to the manager *eight*
thousand pounds. I never made the in-
quiry ; I only hope the report was true.

Mr. Egerton, who heard from rehearsals
what was going on at the Surrey, previously
to the production of this drama, reasoned
with me respecting the inconsistency of
seeing into four rooms at once. My argu-
ment was—it is no more inconsistent to
fancy the wall of four rooms gone, than the
wall of one. In the “ School for Scandal,”
for instance, the audience are not supposed

to be seated in Joseph's apartment—they are supposed to be *gifted* with the faculty of seeing through the wall of the house, and the eyes that can penetrate one brick wall, can, doubtless, penetrate a hundred. The vast difficulty lies in harmonising your scene and characters. I contemplated, at one time, dramatising "The Devil on Two Sticks," and giving the whole street open to the audience: those who wish to forestal me in the idea, are quite welcome to try the experiment.

I shall now dismiss this subject with a few additional complimentary remarks, which gratitude dictates, to the actors. Of Osbaldiston I have already spoken, though not half so well as his acting in this character deserved. In Dan Macraisy, Henry Wallack made a most unlooked for impression. He suddenly, as the rehearsal proceeded, seemed to launch into the character, and to discover its opportunities by degrees, as a boy discovers a problem in mathematics. The low cunning which built itself upon the

exterior of an Irish gentleman—not that he had once *been*, but that he had once *seen*—was an exquisite conception of the part of Dan Macraisy: a sort of Irish Robert Macaire, but even more original, because there are infinitely fewer of such characters to imitate in real life. Where there are a thousand Robert Macaires, there would be scarcely one Dan Macraisy. The audience testified their appreciation of Wallack's performance by calling for him at the fall of the curtain night after night, which was a very unusual compliment in those days. Vale was the character itself. His cross reading the newspaper, in one of the departments of the four-roomed scene, was equal to anything ever attempted by Liston. At these words—

Cal. The Parliament will *dissemble* on the 21st, to take
into consideration—a young 'oman out o' place,
&c. *Act I., Scene 5.*

His natural joy, in the vault where he is spared from signing his own death warrant, was acting not to be described.

So racy—so tottering between tears and laughter, one could scarcely picture it with the pen. Poor Vale! like Yorick with all his merry jibes; he's dead now. The cocknified mirth of his lip is hushed, and the twinkling of his lustrous eyes, has lost its laughing radiance. Such is clay; peace be with him; alas, poor Yorick!

Of Mrs. West, as an actress, I have no need to repeat my sentiments; the devotion and affection which she threw into this drama, as a wife and a mother, had in them a feminine charm, as beautiful, as peculiarly her own. I do not believe any one, that witnessed her personation of Ann Bradford, would find it possible to forget her in one exclamation.

Ann. Oh, my children! my children!
What will become of them?

The expression, and her look of pale maternal despair, as she uttered the words, were a never-failing signal for universal tears; and how very often have I seen females, mothers perhaps, taken out in hysterics?

Rogers was droll by nature ; Miss Vincent was so truly pretty, and so *young*, then—and sang so sweetly, no marvel every one was pleased with her. She first appeared at the Surrey, as a precocious child, in an entertainment, written for her, by the clever Moncrief. Her first appearance in the drama, was in my “Peveril of the Peak,” when she walked on the stage, as little Sir Jeffery Hudson, out of a fiddle-case. It was on the hundredth representation of “Jonathan Bradford,” Mr. Osbaldiston gave a sumptuous *déjeuner* on the stage, to his performers, on which occasion, to my utter surprise, I was presented with a costly silver cup, bearing a highly complimentary inscription. Mrs. West, as the Melpomene of the theatre, was deputed to present the cup ; and, would it be believed, so affected, and so nervous was the amiable lady, (a public actress,) in presenting this tribute of, I do sincerely believe, the general esteem of the company, with only two or three

words to utter, that she would have fallen to the ground, had I not actually sustained her while she addressed me.

No less sensitive myself, generally, than poor Mrs. West, on stepping out of the proscenium, my great faculty of collectedness, in moments of emergency and *impulse* here, came, as it ever did, to my aid; and I, on my part, made a fine flourishing speech, full of metaphors and flowers, no doubt. Whatever it might have been, good, bad, or indifferent, I am convinced that it both pleased, and interested my auditors, mightily; I was at least astonished at the tears in many eyes, and at myself; when I ceased speaking. I could not have executed an *encore*.

The Press generally, as regarded "Jonathan Bradford," was liberal. Some of my old night-mares still haunted me, and endeavoured to turn into ridicule the language, because it was an imitation of the blank verse of the period. The

following lines were particularly selected as a target for the shaft of satire.

Brad. Give me a kiss wife ; nay, another dearest !
Good is the wine that smacketh on the lip :
How be the bantlings ?

Ann. Well ! and both asleep.

John. I've brought lemons and nutmegs—
Sugar ; and the comfits for the children.

Act 1. Scene 1.

Those lemons, &c., were held up especially to derision, yet, strange as it may appear, this very scene was copied from actual life. I had frequently, when a boy, seen the landlord of a small public house, (the Rose,) near our estate, return from market with nutmegs and lemons, which, indispensably, country publicans go to the market towns to purchase, for the use of their customers, not being enabled to obtain, at any price, such commodities in a village ; at the period of this drama, be it recollected, punch being the prevailing tip-top beverage in a rural inn. And I do trust, if any of those kind old friends *be still* in existence, who were then so anxiously watchful, with their tender

mercies, over my inconsistencies, that they will, by this little explanation, perceive I was not altogether so utterly unmindful, even in my days of inexperience, of holding the mirror up to truthful authority, as their almost *parental* caution, rebuke, and vigilance led them to apprehend. But I owe to those Messieurs, perhaps, more gratitude than I then imagined. It is good to be abused sometimes; I have known an author of celebrity write against himself! How my preserving critics would have spared such an author such a self-infliction. Abuse does good in certain cases, if well done. On the occasion of the production of "Frankenstein," it was resorted to; it was asserted in print, by the parties themselves, that no well-thinking person should witness so immoral a piece. The consequence was, the houses were crammed to suffocation! Nothing injures an author, especially a dramatic author, so materially, as *luke-warm praise*. For my own part, I

should prefer the most extravagant abuse ; then, indeed, one might hope for vindication through the sympathy of the public ; which, on the contrary, is too apt to *let well alone*. But, luke-warm praise is, like the upas tree, under the consoling shade whereof a man goes, complacently with himself, to sleep, and *dies*. The Atlas called "Jonathan Bradford" "a fine drama."

The different managers were all astir about this "*fine drama*," in other and more applicable phraseology, money drawing drama. Every one said it would have suited his theatre ; meaning the receipts : that I never sent them such pieces, all reiterated. At Covent Garden they would have settled on me an annuity for life, had I brought it to them. Even Morris, at the Haymarket, to suit whose old-fashioned taste, I had tried every effort in vain, told me, one hot day, as he met me in Piccadilly, that if I had only brought him "Jonathan Bradford," he would have made my *fortune*. The reader has now to judge for himself,

how almost impossible it would have been, to have offered this drama to any theatre, save the one for which it was written ; or suppose that I had offered it to Covent Garden, or the Haymarket, it would have been placed, not even half read, on the shelf, the manager neither understanding, nor troubling himself to understand it, or have coldly returned it, very properly, I think, (especially from the Haymarket,) on reading the title, the *Murder at the Roadside Inn*, with,

“ Mr. Morris presents his compliments
“ to Mr. Fitzball, and regrets that the en-
“ closed M.S. is by *no means* suited to the
“ interest of *his* theatre.

“ Theatre Royal Haymarket, &c.”

“ P.S. Could Mr. Fitzball favour Mr.
“ Morris with the address of Mr. Lunn, or
“ Mr. Douglas Jerrold : bearer waits.”

The truth is, that “ Jonathan Bradford” was only suited to the place where it was brought out, and for which it was *manufactured* ; and would never have been pro-

duced in any regular theatre whatever, where the actor's opinion, as is too frequently the case, is even paramount to that of the manager.

On the twelfth night of "Jonathan Bradford," H. Wallack left England, at a very short notice, taking with him a M.S. of the piece, which he produced in America, with equal success. Wallack, leaving us somewhat abruptly, to my great regret, threw us all aground; what was to be done with a part which his fine acting had rendered his own? The run of the domestic drama, at twelve nights was at an end. I despairingly suggested the idea of installing Mr. Dibdin Pitt in the vacated part of Dan Macraisy, dressing him exactly the same, and letting Wallack's name remain in the bill. It was no more than fair retaliation to ourselves; a mere Roland for Wallack's Oliver. It was done; and, so well and artiste like, did Pitt acquit himself, that at the end of the performance, *he* was unanimously called for, to receive

the customary honours, just the same as those conferred on the original actor, which inflated me a little, with the idea that the piece *might* have had *something* to do with its own popularity, after all.

It may appear somewhat extraordinary, that I should have dwelt, at so considerable a length, on the production of a minor drama, at a *minor* theatre. But the ensuing remarks, may, I trust, offer some extension. When we come to reflect that, during its immense run, *at least four hundred thousand* of the public witnessed its representation ; and that, not merely confined to the middling, or working classes, but contained, within its numbers, some thousands of the highest order of intellect and society ; we have a right to conclude, if we judge by the opinion of the million, as now it is so much the fashion, and most properly so to judge, that this play, for it was, unquestionably, legitimate, contained, without partiality or weakness, a peculiar claim to our prolonged attention, and

remark ; especially upheld, as it had been universally, by the *public* voice. Mr. Cobden would say, " simply because it came so closely home to *English* feeling."

Such examples of a continuous run, are not, I confess, uncommon. But, here was a dramatic work, with no wild horse, like *Mazeppa* ; no rolling ship, like the *Pilot* ; no expanding tree, of gold and emeralds, like the *Island of Jewels* ; nothing *effective* to recommend it ; no *blue fire* ; no superb costumes ; no gorgeous scenery ; no popular actor ; nothing but *natural* language, such as might have flowed from the lips of any existing personage, under similar circumstances, in *real* life ; and, yet, this *unsophisticated originality*, possessed some peculiar magic sufficient to excite the hearts of four hundred thousand approving spectators of all denominations ; and to attract, at moderate prices, in a theatre of no more than ordinary repute, after paying all expenses, at least, the sum

of *seven thousand pounds*. Nor was this all, for I have no hesitation in believing, that its extraordinary success *enabled* — induced the manager who placed it before the public, to take up eventually, as he did, the weighty sceptre of the *great* theatre royal of Europe ; the *then*, Theatre Royal, Covent Garden.

The key-stone in this whole affair, as I might, properly enough, term myself, I cannot in the least divine how it was all compassed and brought to pass. I essayed my best endeavours, afterwards, on the same boards, to renovate the same success in “Walter Brand” and other pieces. Exerted, as I believed, *redoubled* my energies ; I *failed*. What conclusion, then, are we to come to ? Why, that “there is a tide in the affairs of dramas, as well as of men ; which, taken at the flood, leads on to fortune.” And so leave it to the speculations of the curious, in calculations, managers especially, when,

and how to catch that golden tide, and bound, at once, afloat upon its Californian waters.

The public, like the undulating waves of the ocean, is for ever changing ; yet, once moved by a powerful attraction, it is amazing how it will rush on for a long period, to the same point. Who would *profit* by theatrical speculation, should be a *practical* man, that is to say, not a play actor—not a play writer ; neither should he be in love with his principal actress, nor throw bouquets, from his private box, to his principal danseuse, during the ballet. He should be a mere, well-informed man of business, endowed with some feeling, and a sufficiency of taste to know a good drama, that is a drama likely to please the public, whether it please *himself* or *not* ; he should possess, still further, the rare faculty of restraining, not *clipping*, the wings of genius. Genius, from too much volition, is too apt to over-shoot the mark ; but if you cut its wings too closely it cannot fly at all.

If a manager make one success, let him not be disheartened at two or three successive failures, even by the same writer ; *every shock* of your theatrical galvanic battery, cannot be expected to take effect. All metropolitan theatres should have attached to them, at any price, one or two electric shocks in reserve, under the form of *practical* authors. Tom Dibdin was a practical author, but failed as a *manager* and *author* ; Reynolds was a practical author ; Morton, also ; and this latter great practical genius, frequently, received no less than a thousand pounds, richly deserved, for a single play, which his managers could well afford to pay him.

Planché is a practical author, and one of our cleverest ; a little too cautious *perhaps* ; he would braid the sunbeams, so carefully, as not to burn his fingers. In the general parlance of theatrical business a practical author means a play writer who looks beyond his steel pen, and quire of foolscap ; to the O.P. and to the P.S. It

is not *quite* essential, as our friend Dickens has it, that he should *write* for the washing tub; but it is *absolutely* necessary, that he should know there *is* such a commodity as a washing tub, in a theatre where he may be *engaged* to *write*. A practical author should be endowed with *imagination*, mingled with *common sense*. This is the GREAT VITAL alloy in which *so many* are *deficient*. With common sense, however powerful his imagination, and however exaggerated it may appear to others, he will plumb the depth of his venture, and satisfy himself to the solving of a problem in Euclid, as regards the practicability and possibility of his scenic effect, on the stage, or of any original idea emanating from his own brain; and that manager is a wise one who not only respects, but humours *such* a mind, who calculates with it, confides in it, and trails it up gently, leaf by leaf, to his own advantage. Yates was very clever at this, and had great discernment when an original idea was started to him, however

absurd it might have appeared to others ; he could extract the wheat from the chaff, and bring forth a lustre from a gem, which, in its original state, seemed almost too dull for polishing. There are many managers, I believe, who even think it unnecessary to answer the letters of unknown authors,—authors who are anxiously waiting with many a heart-burn, no doubt, to catch the first gleam of hope for their own merits. In my mind, no plea of business can excuse such neglect ; and if a manager is so clever as to do without reader or secretary, he is bound to reply to such letters *himself*, and that courteously, for his *own* sake.

I have been dramatic reader myself, in the Theatre Royal, Covent Garden, and the Theatre Royal, Drury Lane, some years, and the fact of remembering that I invariably answered every letter, and, with the best grace in my power, mitigated every disappointment, is to me, at this moment, an unspeakable satisfaction.

I have but these few hints to supply, as

regards attracting audiences, or as regards management. Do whatever you will, much finesse is required, only too much finesse is bad, and frequently operates like too much wine against ourselves. He that is too cunning for others, is, sometimes, too cunning for himself. I am an advocate for a long lease to a theatre; a good, *willing* company, and *no stars*; a sensible manager; (and only a manager,) one who understands the authors and actors he employs, and knows how to place them according to their respective merits. Under such auspices, the English drama, even at a national house, might, once more, become the *fashion*. Her Gracious Majesty, also, extends towards us every prospect of patronage, in the countenance, which she accords the stage and its representatives through the performance of the state plays at the castle at Windsor. I only hope, that, shortly, some modern Shakspeare may suddenly burst upon us, and, as in the days of Elizabeth, instead of so many borrowed

plumes, viz., translations, we may have something *original* to be proud of, the *pure invention* of *English* minds, and written *originally* in the *English language*; worthy the support and approval of an *English* queen, and an English people.

The next attempt I made at the Surrey, proved, as all pieces invariably do, after a great hit, by the same author, a comparative failure. Even in worldly matters, it becomes necessary to cross the grain. This I take to be a providential equalization, which philosophically speaking, is intended to balance both good and evil. We everywhere observe it. The public judge by your foregoing productions, and if you cannot surpass yourself, you are the *cause* of your *own failure*, and, as it was not considered that I had surpassed myself in "Walter Brand; or, the Duel in the Mist," from the Diary of a Physician, that comedy was treated as a partial failure, after "Jonathan Bradford;" exactly in the same degree as the Flying Dutchman

was esteemed a failure, after the "Pilot." No author, however successful, should produce the next drama to his own in any theatre. The only event remarkable enough to be told, as respects the production of "Walter Brand," was the excitement of the public on the *first* night. From the reputation of the last drama, they expected an *impossible* representation, and absolutely stormed the roof of the theatre—burst open the doors, and broke in at the skylights; the manager was necessarily compelled to call in the police, to keep the people *out* of his *theatre*. In the interior, all was noise, confusion, and turmoil. The drama went off in dumb show; for several evenings not a word was heard, and when it was heard, the story was too refined for them. "Mary Glastonbury," a succeeding melo-drama, met with a somewhat better fate; but she again proved too romantic and poetical.* "Esmeralda" brought

* Each of these dramas ran sixty nights; but a success of that kind, was, then, considered in *me* a failure! It does

things more to their usual level. But the reader is not to suppose these various dramatic productions were quite so speedily brought before the public, as their record is placed, by the pen, upon this paper. He is to calculate upon the beginnings and endings, the goings and comings, the hopes and misgivings, the wear and tear of the mind occurring between each, and to comprehend a recapitulation of similar facts, which, if repeated here, might bring about a sameness, uninteresting and tiresome.

On the subject of "L'Esmeralda," however, being founded on the splendid work of Victor Hugo, I think I may venture to dwell some little time, without trespassing too far on the reader's patience. My wife had lately read this charming romance in its native language. It greatly excited her feelings; she wished to read it to me, but

not bear itself out in practice, that overwrought early success is so beneficial an affair after all. Your Gladiator, who kills his dozen opponents at the *first* round, will be sneered at, if, in the second, he only exterminate ten, though no one else shall be able to kill five.

I was weary of writing, just then ; almost worn out ; weary of myself, and refused to listen. Still she persevered, without tormenting, and gently, at length, won me over. I heard bits and scraps, to the dramatic fitness of which it was impossible to remain long insensible. And Esmeralda was dramatised.

I almost forget who was manager at Drury Lane: was it Mr. Bunn? No matter. I carried Esmeralda there ; Cooper was deputed to peruse it. It was by *no manner of means* likely to suit Cooper's taste ; and was of course disapproved, and pronounced unintelligible. On my way home, with my M.S. in my pocket, happening to call upon Yates, I told him the mortifying circumstance of Cooper's rejection of " L'Esmeralda." I will not, here, enter into any discussion on Yates's apprehensions as regarded the fatality of Cooper's criticisms, save to surprise the reader by asserting that they did not prevent his dis-

playing the utmost anxiety to hear "Esmeralda," and judge for himself.

I read him the drama: he accepted it *immediately*. Himself, Mrs. Yates, Mrs. West, O. Smith, &c, &c., had entered into an engagement to perform, during a season, at the Surrey, and "Esmeralda" was exactly the sort of representation he wished to produce. Himself, Quasemoda; Mrs. Yates, Esmeralda; O. Smith, the Monk; and Mrs. Wm. West, Gudule; with dances under the direction of Oscar Byrne. Could any cast be better? None! Our terms were agreed upon; and, so far as regarded myself, in theatrical language, this was what they would have called, "lighting upon my feet again."

April 14th, 1834. "Esmeralda" was beautifully produced. Scenery, costumes, perfect. Yates's peculiar genius fitted him for Quasemoda. There was a refined, an intellectual pathos in the way in which he uttered—"I owed you life; you have re-

paid yourself," in fine keeping with his whole conception of that highly poetical character. Of Mrs. Yates, the charming interesting Mrs. Yates, then all the rage, she was the veritable Esmeralda. O. Smith's Monk can be well imagined by those who knew, or, alas ! now, know what a master of his art he was. But the great part to be spoken of was Mrs. Wm. West's Gudule ; it was received with a continuous burst of applause from the beginning of her scenes to their termination. I wish Victor Hugo could have seen her.

Not long after the production of " Esmeralda," Osbaldiston relinquished the Surrey Theatre, and Mr. Davage became its manager. I believe he did not at first in any way make it answer his purpose. At length he applied to me, as having written there with so much advantage to the establishment, to supply him with some novelty. I was engaged elsewhere, and could not write for him ; but offered him an *operatic* drama, already written, with Rodwell's

music, and founded on Sir Walter Scott's "Lord of the Isles," which he readily consented to bring out. The singers engaged for this purpose were Wilson, Edwin, Morley, Miss Somerville, and Miss Land. This was, according to my recollection, the *first* operatic attempt at the Surrey Theatre, and exceedingly well it answered the purpose. Rodwell's music pleased everybody. The "Bridal Ring," and "Flower of Ellerslie," especially, became quite popular airs. We have seen, since, how that audience has been taught to relish and appreciate the music, not only of our own Balfe and Wallace, but of Bellini, Meyerbeer, and Donizetti: while our first national singers have found a sanctuary on the boards of the Surrey Theatre, when the national doors were all closed against them. Wilson's sweet tenor voice, with Morley's deep bass, Miss Somerville's brilliant execution, and Miss Land's clear notes, harmonised exquisitely. We have no such good second tenor now as Edwin. "The

Lord of the Isles" ran, I believe, eighty nights—most astonishing for an opera then on that side of the water. Davage eventually, made a fortune in the Surrey Theatre. He was a man that caught at any popular chance, no matter what, so long as it served the immediate purpose of his pecuniary interests. He was a good, dry actor: in old men of blunt feelings, requiring to be well stirred up, quite at home. His veteran of a hundred years has left no competitor. Just, however, as he had realised a good fortune, although accomplished in a very few years, he was attacked by a frightful malady, which hurried him prematurely to the grave, leaving him scarcely time to enjoy even a few golden days of his affluent prosperity.

The act passed by parliament, in favour of dramatic authors, at this time, the better to enable them to meet with a remuneration equal to their labour, proved highly beneficial to me; and would have been more so, had I not previously disposed of

so many of my copyrights, to Mr. Cumberland, who claimed upon his assignments the new privilege of nightly remuneration for dramatic pieces acted, either in town or country. This event, of course, was never contemplated by the legislature, whose intention was simply to assist literary, (and too frequently necessitous,) men, not publishers. However, the case was tried with Cumberland by the Author's Society, and the judge gave it in favour of the former. (Law but not justice.) I cannot, nor ever shall admit it into my opaque brain, how it is that *Copyright* can mean right over an *original*. But as these intricacies of law are quite out of my depth, the less I dabble in them the better, and return to the thread of my narrative.

In 1835. I next brought out "Carlmilham," for Mr. Bunn, at Covent Garden Theatre, and the "Note Forger," at Drury Lane, both on the same night. There never was a more beautiful scene on any stage, than that painted by the Grieves' in "Carl-

milham." It represented a drowned crew lying at the bottom of the ocean, with their vain, ill-gotten treasures glittering around them, and the hull of their dilapidated vessel half-buried in sand.

Webster, now lessee of the Adelphi, G. Bennet, Cooper, Meadows, Brindal, Mrs. Fitzwilliam, and Miss Taylor, were the supporters of this Spectacle, which had an old crime of mine, the failing of being too romantic; and that is a very injudicious fault, where one cannot collect an audience of romancists. Farley produced it. It went smoothly; but the other *twin*, the "Note Forger" went much better, sustained, certainly, by a more powerful cast, namely, Denvil, Ward, Frederick Vining, Harley, Miss Tree, (now Mrs. Kean,) and Mrs. Humby. As nearly all these good actors are still before the public, (with a few exceptions,) it would be obtrusive for me to make any remarks. Their merits are far beyond the humble meed of individual commendation, and my only regret is,

that they have no longer a temple worthy of their genius to minister in, but are driven about from shrine to shrine, like the wanderers of Holy Writ, to offer up their incense wherever they find a temporary resting place.

Mr. Kean, a scholar, an actor, and a gentleman, has, in the place of my friend Maddox, become lessee of the Princess's Theatre, in Oxford Street. His talent, his name, and also his high standing with the Court, especially, from his being director of the court plays before Her Majesty at Windsor, may, I hope, secure to him the best and most exalted patronage both for the sake of himself and the well-doing of the drama.

Some years have now passed since the above remarks were written, and all that I anticipated has come to pass. Shakspeare never was put upon the stage, I should say, so perfectly as by Charles Kean. His original authors have been Marston and Douglas Jerrold : I wish I could have added my own

name to the list. I never wrote anything for him except the opening of a pantomime—"Alonzo and Imogene." He paid me handsomely, and what was better, always treated me with respect, and like a gentleman. But I do not think he could do otherwise to any one.

I remember, one night, at Drury Lane, Charles Kean was playing Richard. A cat ran across the stage at the back, and the audience laughed, as they always do on such occasions. Kean said, when he came into the green-room, he distinctly saw the cat as if he had eyes *behind* him.

A similar circumstance attended him on another occasion, in the same theatre, of which, perhaps, he was unconscious. He was playing Hamlet, on coming to—

"Where's Pollonius?"

"Why, there he goes!" cries out a voice in the gallery from a lusty fellow, pointing to a lubberly boy stalking slowly across the stage, in a long white surplice; and no doubt the intelligent informant took him for the ghost of poor Ophelia's papa.

Of Mrs. Charles Kean I wish to express myself in terms of the most unqualified commendation ; not merely as to what is simply due to her as a great artist, but as a lady of the highest moral character. She is another of those bright examples to prove that a woman *may* pass through a public life, even on the stage, and travel through many lands, subject to every species of adulation, approval, temptation, and annoyance, and yet remain an honour to her sex.

Notwithstanding the *envied* good fortune which it cannot be denied I had, upon the whole, experienced in my career of dramatic authorship, there were times when a certain nausea would rise up and embitter every feeling in my heart against the profession which I had adopted.

Man never is, but always to be blessed.

In the first place, my health became very precarious. The unceasing excitement of writing *for a living*, acted forcibly upon my nervous system. I ailed every malady under heaven ; or, at least, so imagined, which

amounted almost to the same thing, so far as care and anxiety were concerned, and the spirits affected. My wife was a willing, patient martyr to all my caprices, bodily and mentally; and, of the two, was the one more to be pitied. Little excursions to Richmond, Twickenham, Brighton, and France, almost invariably connected with business, relieved occasionally these chagrins, and brought me back to town with new energies, for new campaigns: added to which, a family circumstance led to the idea that we should one day, at no very distant period, be in a much better condition—no longer dependant on the labour of the brain, which becomes dreadful *indeed* when it becomes a *necessity*.

In our family there was an elderly lady of the name of Ellison. She resided at the city of York, where she had lived an almost secluded life for many years. She was related to my father, having been formerly a Miss Ball; I cannot even now tell in what degree, I only remembered to have

heard him speak of her as his cousin Ellison, and to call himself *her heir at law*. I had seen her, when I was a child, for she came every year to visit my father at Burwell. My impression then as a boy was that she was a very ancient woman. It appears that her father, a Mr. Edward Ball, the same name as my own, had been a man of great substance at Saffron Walden, (the mayor,) and this, his only daughter, Miss Lydia Ball, was in fact a wealthy heiress. It so happened that a Mr. Ellison, one of the Ellison family of the Member for Newcastle, married this Miss Ball; and, none to his credit, spent her money and treated her very badly. He dropped down dead, however, one day in the street at York, and Mrs. Ellison remained, I do not apprehend, an inconsolable widow to the end of her days.

Now I "arise in my story." I was sadly indisposed one morning. My wife seated near me by my bed-side, when the servant came up stairs to inform us that a strange

sort of woman named Mrs. *Nelson*, had come all the way from York to see *me*. Nelson was a desirable name to enter into one's visiting list. But as I was not intimately acquainted with any of Lord Nelson's venerable family, although I resided within a few doors of them in Norwich, I did not apprehend that any of that illustrious race would give him, or herself rather, the trouble to seek me out by inquiry, much more follow me to London. While we were debating this matter, who should enter the apartment but the lady in question herself. I recognised her in an instant ; it *was* Mrs. Ellison. She was a tall, gaunt, Queen-Margaret of Anjou sort of looking woman, whose outline it would have been somewhat difficult to have expelled from the memory. With great dignity she strode up to the bed-side and kissed me, as if, like Joan of Arc, she recognised me by a sort of instinct, for I could not have been above ten or eleven years old when she last beheld me ; and then I was a smooth-faced, fair, girlish

sort of looking young gentleman. Now my face was getting somewhat red, with constantly holding my head down over the M.S.S., and my cheeks required no aid from Rowland to add to their embellishment. A large basket suspended on her arm contained, as it appeared, her wardrobe ; and, taking off her bonnet and shawl, she began to make herself perfectly at home, informing us that she intended to remain with us at least a *month* ! This was agreeable. What were we to do with her ?—how amuse a being so eccentric ? The fact was, however, from long habits of solitude, she required no amusing, and in the end amused us. My wife, whose hospitality always far out-travelled her means, did everything in her power to make her guest comfortable. She became exceedingly attached to us, and especially to our little girl ; and told me that since my father's and brother's death, having no known relation nearer than myself, she had been at some trouble to discover my whereabouts, which at length she

obtained of a Mrs. Cooke, a niece of my father's, on the same line of kindred as myself. What this line of relationship might have been I never troubled myself to inquire. I certainly remembered hearing my father call himself heir-at-law to Mrs. Ellison, and my brother make the same boast, but I never even sought any information on that, nor any other right that I might have held over this lady's property; I had too much delicacy—too much feeling; and, although in the course of our renewed acquaintanceship she insinuated, herself, that the better part of her estates *must* be mine, I shrunk back from the slightest investigation, lest it should seem that I had other motives for the esteem, which, in the end, I really entertained for her, than those of sincerity and disinterestedness. She *felt* this—I am quite certain she did. Known as a wealthy woman, everybody paid her an obsequious adulation, for a sinister purpose. She was shrewd, and could always detect that intention, and feel disgusted with it.

I was a *young* man, independent in my feelings, and endowed with a certain talent, whereby I could always live respectably; and had it been otherwise I should have loathed in myself that meanness of all meannesses—calculating happiness by another's *death*.

At the same time, as I have already stated, the mantle of independence which might one day, (*so willingly conferred,*) have fallen upon us, supplied no unpleasant perspective, at least, as regarded my family. It was a beacon light, kindled by Mrs. Ellison; and if, in moments of storm and trouble, I turned my despairing eyes to its friendly radiance, even for a single instant, I was mortal, and for so slight a transgression surely might have been forgiven. The storm past, I forgot that rainbow light—I forgot all dependency on other's means—and, buried in new excitements, had almost forgotten the so frequently talked of heir-at-lawship itself, of which I knew about as much as I did of the Chancellor of the

Exchequer, when one day, I received a letter from a Mrs. Robinson, of York, informing me of the death of Mrs. Ellison, who had died of apoplexy, and as she, her intimate friend, had never heard her mention any *relative* save myself, the letter requested me to repair with all speed to York, to take possession of the keys of the deceased, the house, and the property.

We were truly grieved, notwithstanding the promised advantages before us, for the unhappy fate of Mrs. Ellison. (We should actually have been on a visit at her house at the time of her death, had not my daughter been suddenly taken with the measles.) I set out by the York coach with a very heavy heart—an emotion of the deepest despondency. I was always sad at leaving home, even for a single night. I suffered from home sickness, and felt sadder on this occasion, than on any former.

At York I was put into possession of everything pertaining to Mrs. Ellison, by Mrs. Robinson—a lady of high standing

and fortune—house, plate, keys, papers ; and the bankers, so far as regarded her private account, looked upon me as heir to the deceased. She was very rich. But this heir-at-lawship, so long talked of, was not to be *proved* by me. What my *father knew*, or fancied that he knew, on that subject was buried in his grave—a secret that no one, save that One who knows all secrets, could unravel. Mrs. Ellison had made no *new* will, or none could be found. The will she had made was dated *before my birth*. Her property was bequeathed there to my father, but *not* to his *heirs* ; consequently, this bubble of sparkling independence, which had risen, so uncalled for before me, burst at once into a hundred hues, and made itself air as speedily. Yet, I still firmly believe, had it been possible for the dead to have become acquainted with this painful result, that Mrs. Ellison would have felt much more regret than I. If ever she had made a new will, it was never discovered, despite of every search,

at least by those to whom she most intended good. But the impression on my mind is, that she intended to make a new will when we should visit York. My child's illness protracted the time, and her own *sudden death* put a stop to every intention in our favour. This, altogether, looks again very like a *destiny*. 'Tis past—but so it was.

Then there was an obstinate, half-childish, aged man, an executor, who took possession by the old will. Then came the Misses Ellisons, the sisters of the M.P., in their post-carriage from Newcastle, who had sundry legacies bequeathed them, and who *complimented me mightily on my family likeness to the deceased*. Then there was a beating up for the next of kin, and a Mrs. Nunn, of Saffron Walden, and a Doctor Steward were found, *aged* persons, who actually received *many* thousands of pounds each. The latter, in particular, never knew nor heard probably of Mrs. Ellison, nor she of him. It was I who recollected having heard my mother speak of him. He

might be a relative: I wrote to him to that effect. This *Rev. Doctor Steward* did, I believe, most unexpectedly receive nine thousand pounds. Yet never had he the common *humanity* to reply to my first letter, nor to a second; nor did I ever receive from these, my *near relatives*, the consideration of a single shilling, although they well knew my position, and were both of them very rich, independently of this certainly never dreamed of acquisition, and which they had only attained because it had pleased God to prolong their days. For Mrs. Ellison, I knew, alas! too well what her intentions *were*. I certainly did shed tears upon her coffin—*sincere ones*. I should say they were the only tears shed by any other relative to her memory.

While I was in the house of this late Mrs. Ellison, on looking out of the chamber window one morning, with a heavy heart, things going so contrary, and wishing in that strange place, where I knew nobody, for some kind look from an old acquaintance

to comfort me, who at that moment should open the opposite window but dear George Bartley, of Covent Garden. His face, so familiar to me in town, and always with a kind recognition upon it, like the rising sun, seemed to brighten up my heart, and to point out the way to new hopes and happier realities.

After an absence of about a week—the only week's absence I ever spent from my affectionate partner, during a marriage of many years—I was truly happy to find myself again in old Fetter Lane, and to see my dear wife, and my little anxious Louisa waiting my arrival at the coach. Our disappointments were speedily forgotten; our separation had seemed an age; and in the society of each other, we two knew how to defy every care, but sickness. Oh! the meeting of true hearts. Even in sickness, we had a charm, a spell, in our mutual love to ameliorate, to subdue affliction almost into a delight, since it offered us so materially, the opportunity of consoling each other.

In concluding this volume, an anecdote relating to the elder Kean, which I forgot in the early part of the work, I hope may not prove unacceptable to the reader here.

When Edmund Kean, in the zenith of his great fame, was starring it in Norwich, after having one night performed *Sir Giles Overreach*, he went leisurely, alone, out of the theatre, and, happening to pass some hotel, the Angel, in the Market Place, perhaps; he walked in—nobody knew him, and calling for brandy and water, one glass after another, it grew very late, ere he bethought himself of retiring to his regular lodgings; in fact, he bethought himself of no such whereabouts, till it so happened that some horn sounding outside, probably the mail, he imagined himself summoned to the encounter with Richmond, on Bosworth Field; and snatching up a candlestick as a truncheon, rushed forth to seek White Surrey. Not knowing, however, the exact geography of the district, the antedeluvian windings and labyrinths of the cloud cap't castellated

antique city, he speedily found himself surrounded on all sides by all sorts of mysterious buildings, in a select place, called the Back of the Inns, for which there were very few *outs*, about as difficult for a stranger to thread, especially past midnight, as the far-famed labyrinth, yclept Rosamond's Bower; consequently, Kean became soon lost, his head being already confused, in those narrow and dense intricacies. At length, coming to the foot of an old wooden staircase, which conducted to a chamber, pertaining to the dwelling house of a very excellent and unsophisticated old widow lady, he made his way up, and by the dim light of an opposite lamp, seeing the name of Mrs. Woodhouse on the partially glazed door, began knocking with his candlestick, exclaiming at the same time, in the language of Macbeth—

Open locks,
Whoever knocks,
Mistress Woodhouse.

The poor dear old lady, (I knew her very well) living almost entirely by herself, dread-

fully alarmed at being so woke up, and hearing this unseasonable application, she being very fat, tumbled out of bed, trembling in every joint, thinking, as she afterwards said, her last hour was come, especially when, through a broken pane of the frail door, she heard such terrific words as—

Bloody, bold, and resolute.

Fortunately, this was at the back of the mansion ; the agitated old lady, more dead than alive, therefore, naturally, made her way to the front, not daring to strike a light, much more to look behind her, or make the slightest enquiry as to the untimely visit of the nocturnal intruder, lest she might encounter some long clasped knife, with its pitiless edge, ready to second the fearful accents which she had just heard :

Bloody, bold, and resolute.

Her little fat maid servant, the miniature resemblance of Mrs. Woodhouse's fat self, more alarmed, if possible, than her mistress, waddled in her wake, expecting every instant

a blade, between her, not even gauze-covered, blade bones, then swiftly as strength would permit unbolted the outer portal, and with a voice shrill enough to have cut a lemon into quarters, succeeded in waking up, not only one, but two regular Charlies, sound men and true, from their comfortable state of somnolency, who, after rubbing their eyes, and peeping cautiously into their dingy horn lanterns, repaired, not without some perturbation, to the foot of the fatal staircase, to ascertain if it was not an air drawn dagger which had presented itself, of such miraculous dimensions, to the terrified back glancing of the loquacious maid.

At the top of the staircase, under a sort of washtub penthouse, sat, now fast asleep, the appalling object of their startled enquiries. After an instant's tremulous examination, the hero of Bosworth awoke; his eyes, such eyes, nearly extinguishing the Charlies' up-lifted lanterns. The night dark and stormy, transferred his thoughts into a

new channel. He hoarsely addressed the doughty guardians of the night with—

How now, ye black and midnight hags?
What is't ye do?

“That ere’s what we’re just comed to axt you,” was the tremulous reply of the most courageous of the somewhat weird-sisterish-looking Charlies.

Kean started to his feet, flourishing the long candlestick, mistaken for a dagger, at which one poor old Charley fell down in a fit, while the valiant other, rolling from the top to the bottom of the stairs, lay there with his legs sprawled uppermost like a letter Y reversed. At length, he found courage to spring his rattle, but Kean had made his quick exit, having “first put out the light, and then—”

Assistance came, with a shutter, on which Charley one, was conveyed to the hospital; while the other described a fearful encounter, in which he gallantly worsted a nobody-knew-what, with two globes of fire for optics;

but the little maid came to the conclusion, that it could not have been the devil, as he strongly advised her to "go to a nunnery."

Alas! I have just heard of the death of poor, dear, merry Harley, who though a man of many years, was still as green and buoyant, both in body and mind, as a youth of nineteen; and, to see him on the stage, to the last, a stranger might well have thought him such. As a faithful interpreter of Shakspeare's clowns, he has left no competitor to surpass, if equal him. (the mantle falls upon Compton.) His last appearance was in Launcelot Gobbo, the Jew's servant in the "Merchant of Venice," at the Princess's Theatre; he had no sooner made his exit off the stage, than he was summoned by the call of death, to make his appearance in an eternal world, from whose bourne no traveller returns. Up to that fatal moment, more than seventy years of age, the health of Harley had been so invariably good, he had never been known

to require the aid of a doctor ; as his life had been a prosperous and happy one, so his end seems to have been painless, with a sweet unconsciousness.

As an actor, Harley requires no panegyric ; enough that whatever he undertook, and he was by no means fantastic in his duty, he became *the* character intended by the author. He never stood sneering at the wing, turning over his part, and imagining himself a *victim*, if another had a telling speech to utter, but, by careful study and genius, made that tell in his *own* part, which, perhaps, was never dreamt of as a feature, by the writer.

Harley was always most approachable, most amiable, and exceedingly communicative ; an upright and honourable man, a glory to his profession, a sincere friend, and right-minded adviser, invaluable as *truth* itself.

Not long ago, wishing to balance my opinion as respected a comedy, " The Widow's

Wedding," I had written, I requested Harley to read it, he did so with the most cheerful accordance. The following is his *original* reply :

" TO EDWARD FITZBALL ESQ.

" 14, Upper Gower-Street,
" Bedford Square, May 15, 1856.

" DEAR FITZBALL,—

" ' Jacob,' is a gem, and his ' Lucy
" love,' a right loveable partner ; both cha-
" racters are, in my mind, admirably fitted
" to the couple for whom they were ori-
" ginally designed.*

" Your Widow puzzles me ; her wedding,
" and the way it is brought about, puzzles
" me. The Prodigal, (a capital Wallack
" part, in by-gone brigand days,) puzzles
" me, and Elizabethan parlance, by Pall
" Mall promenaders, in 1787, puzzles me.

" I do not clearly see my way through
" FIVE ACTS ; would it puzzle you to com-
" press it ! It will, I fear, puzzle your

* Buckstone and Mrs. Fitzwilliam.

“ painter, upon whom you have drawn
“ largely for scenic effects.

“ I won’t apologize for the freedom I
“ have used ; for I am sure you will not
“ suspect me of any motives but those
“ which arise from regard to your talents,
“ nor need I tell the hero of a hundred
“ well-fought battles, that, in his encounter
“ with the Egyptians,* he loses no jot of his
“ honourable and well-established fame.

“ With all good wishes,

“ Very truly yours,

“ J. P. Harley.”

Not wishing to come to a conclusion with so melancholy an event as poor Harley’s death, lest I should leave a sad impression on my reader, I shall just throw in here, a somewhat comic anecdote of old Charles Incledon, related to me, recently, by a gentleman, who has been for many years, a great admirer of the stage ! Charles Incledon ; I remember seeing him once, and hearing him sing when I was a boy at

* Meaning “ Nitocris.”

school, He was very fat, with an immense white cravat, in which his chin seemed buried; he played Macheath; his costume was a blue dress coat, with gilt buttons, a white waistcoat, leather smalls, and top boots! Oh, tempora! but to the anecdote: The Theatre Royal Bury St. Edmunds, in Suffolk, was perhaps the most celebrated in the united kingdom for the attendance of the aristocracy; especially at the great fair, when lords and ladies, in those old-fashioned days on which I speak, not unfrequently had chairs placed for their accommodation on the stage, whereon they sat in the most fashionable dresses, to be as much stared at as the performers themselves, and not unfrequently shouted to, by their name and titles, from the galleries. The great night after the ball was sure to be a crowded stage, as they called it, with little room for the actors to pass in and out. "I recollect going to the Angel Inn," said my informant, "with Charles Incedon, after one

of those grand gala nights, when Incledon had been singing at the theatre, with a few congenial spirits." As usual, Charles was very much inebriated, as were not a few of the others.

In the course of their orgies, a young officer, of a yeomanry cavalry regiment, Captain C——e, was giving a glowing description of a sham fight in which he commanded, when Incledon made some cutting remark about feather-bed soldiers. This was readily construed into a personal insult by the really gallant young officer, and he and the popular singer would have come to something, anything but harmonious, but for the benign interference of Bob the waiter, who persuaded the enraged belligerents to subdue their wrath and settle, as they agreed to do, with sword or pistol, the ensuing morning. Bob in his experience, no doubt, fully believing that the following morning, as usual in such cases, the oblivious antidote, sleep, would have buried all in

eternal forgetfulness. But not so; the next morning the young cavalry officer was stirring with the lark, and although he resided at Barton, several miles off, with the impetuosity of the *Devil*, returned, by times, to the *Angel*, to demand satisfaction for the affront he had received.

Inclledon, who had quite forgotten all about the feather-bed insult, was fast asleep in *his* feather-bed, unmindful as if the affair had never occurred. Not so the captain, neither could all the celebrated oratory of Bob, the waiter, produce the slightest diminution of his determined resolution to terminate the affront with blood.

At length, after various ineffectual arguments to the contrary, Bob consented to introduce the enraged man of war to Inclledon's bed-side, which being done, finding Inclledon so wrapped in the arms of Morpheus, who, awake, had no other idol than Orpheus, he summoned him with martial voice, to be up, and buckle on his armour.

Inclendon, who had been dreaming all about singing the storm, rubbed his eyes, thinking he heard the thunder peal in his ears, and began to pipe.

“Cease rude boreas, blustering railer,”

when he beheld C——e, in a menacing attitude, pointing to the open door.

“Who are you? and what the devil do you want here?” cried the amazed vocalist.

“You, I want!” was the infuriated reply, “and satisfaction for the affront offered me here, at the Angel, last night.”

“Satisfaction?” reiterated Inclendon, scratching his head, and striving to recollect himself, in some bewilderment.

“Satisfaction! by G——d I will have it!” cried the wrathful captain.

“So you shall,” answered Inclendon, sitting up, and beginning to sing the popular song of “Black Eyed Susan,” which he executed with so much melody, grace, and feeling, that although the room had become crowded, there was’nt a dry eye in it, not even the captain’s. When he had

ended, "There," he said, blandly, "my fine fellow, that has satisfied thousands, let it satisfy you," and putting forth his hand, it was as generously taken as offered; and the affair was ended.

Another and another yet succeeds; here I purposed coming to a *rest*, but as old Astley once said, that is an allowable thing. The story is not new, but nevertheless amusing.

Old Astley.

Old Philip Astley, a great favourite of George III., but a very ignorant old fellow, though remarkably clever as a trainer of horses, was the first manager of Astley's, which still bears his popular name.

One day during the rehearsal of a spectacle, the band suddenly came to a standstill. "Hillo!" cried Philip to the leader, "what's the matter now?" "It's a *rest*," answered the man of resin. "A *rest*?" exclaimed Philip, "I don't pay you to *rest*, I pay you to *play*, so strike up."

A chromatic passage ensued.

"What the devil do you call that?" enquired the sagacious Philip. "Are you going to give us all the stomach-ache?" "It's a chromatic passage." "A rheumatic passage? It's in your arm, I suppose, and that's why you wanted rest." "It's a passage," cried the discomfited fiddler. (It was before the days of the baton.) "Everybody must run up the passage." "The devil they must!" ejaculated the astute manager, "let them do it in the day time; if they do it at night, the public will wonder what the devil has become of them."

Rodwell used to say of me, that I was always *wrongest*, but invariably somehow came *rightest*. Perhaps, therefore, these few anecdotes may bring up the dullness of the foregoing, and a ghost story, of all things, is sure to interest, and will, no doubt, be expected of me.

Of a Ghost.

The other day, dining at a friend's, I

heard a story related which deserves to be recorded. A young man in Edinburgh, afterwards a popular professor, being very fond of anatomising, a friend of his at one of the hospitals frequently supplied him with a *leg* or an *arm* to try his *hand* upon. On one occasion the friend wrote him a note to say, if he wished to examine the development of the brain, he could give him a black man's head for a subject. Accordingly, the future professor repaired to the hospital, and received the promised treasure wrapt up in a sheet of brown paper, with which he was hurrying away amongst the ups and downs of Edinburgh, when his foot slipped, and down rolled the head till it came against a half-opened door, where it lay, apparently grinning at the party inside, which consisted of a rascally old slave dealer on his death-bed, and an old nurse, with one or two others. Be sure the consternation was not small; everybody hurried towards the bed, and some scrambled,

screaming up stairs. In the meantime, the young anatomist, seizing the head by the wool upon its pate, scrambled away with it as fast as he could. But to this day the story is solemnly told, and believed, of the ghostly head of the decapitated *slave* that haunted the rascally old *slave seller* in his dying moments.

I was on the point of making a pun here on this ghost story, only I am suddenly reminded by old Mathew's witticism on a man who will make a pun will pick a pocket, which is the last impression I wish these pages to make on my readers; the more especially as puns, the best of them—mine was somewhat indifferent—are sometimes a little out of place. Poor Harley used to relate an anecdote to this effect: In proceeding to some starring engagement by the coach before the days of railroads, he happened to sit by a matter-of-fact fat farmer, hot for want of air, cramped for want of room. "Sur!" said the farmer, "can 'e tell me

which be the way to Sitenburn?" "I believe we are in the way now," observed the droll Harley, "for I find the way to *sit an' burn* is inside this confounded narrow coach."

The tail of a kite supplies to me the idea of this peculiar termination, with this slight exception—on unravelling the little pieces of paper, it is not probable you would find anything more inside than airy nothings; every one of my morceaus contains a bonbon—I can only hope they may *go off* well. Talking of travelling by coach in coach days, finally brings back to my recollection one of the ghost-like circumstances of past, for ever faded times, and this within twenty miles of Brighton, too. We changed horses at a sideway public house, where I suppose no one ever alighted. A shoe came off one of the horses, and being forced to wait during the operation of re-shoeing, we descended, as usual, to stretch our legs. My wife having a new bonnet for travelling, wished, perhaps with a little vanity, to take a peep at herself

in the looking-glass, and on enquiring for that said delusive article, was told by the landlady that they had not such a thing in the house, but they had once, and if she liked to look at herself in the *frame* she might.

“How do you find yourself?” some one enquired of Jerry Sneak Russell, called so from his unequalled personation of Jerry Sneak. “How do I find myself to-day?” ejaculated the wag, “I don’t find myself at all; I’m going to the Mansion House, where the Lord Mayor will find me.”

Once more with a very great old favourite,

Mr. Liston.

Mrs. Egerton told me a laughable story about Liston, the great Liston of immortal memory. Liston, she said, was somewhat personally conceited, and thought, innately, that both his talents and his looks were mistaken by the public. One day having to enact Mawworm in a country theatre, and finding that he had left his character

wig behind him, he sent for the only barber in the place, and gave him another wig to do up. When the man returned, he had transformed the wig into a profusion of well-macassered curls. "How is this?" cried Liston, surprised, "why have you not made the hair to fall smooth and stiffly, combed back as I directed?" "It woun't ha bin the laste *proper*," answered the barber, eyeing his work in a perfect trance of admiration! "It woun't have done no good to your countenance." "Ah," said Liston, smirking, "then *you* think that curls become me?" "Sartainly," was the not very agreeable reply, "sartainly; they *hides* your face, an' the more you combs 'em over the better."

I was going to introduce an anecdote respecting Donna Lola Montez, but I think, on second thoughts, I shall here conclude.

My next pages present me more in the light of an opera writer, with a new *dramatis personæ* around me, giving an entire turn and a fresh feature to the work;

inasmuch as, in the coming pages, you will find me almost constantly engaged in my *Theatre Royal career*—an inmate of Covent Garden and Drury Lane—one of “Her Majesty’s servants”—a writer of Grand Opera and gorgeous Tragedy—Thalia on one side, Melpomene on the other. And, thus, I respectfully ring down the curtain over the conclusion of my first volume.

END OF VOL. I.

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